FOREIGN
BROADCAST
INFORMATION
SERVICE

Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-96-141
Monday
22 July 1996

Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-96-141 CONTENTS *22 July 1996*

NOTICE: An * indicates material that may not be disseminated in electronic form.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Islamic Affairs

Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 12 Jul 1

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Holds Talks With Mubarak in Cairo *[Jericho VOP]* 4
Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Returns Home After 'Important' Talks With Mubarak *[Jericho VOP]* 4
Palestinian Affairs: AFP—Details of 'Arafat 25 Jul Trip to Damascus 4
Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat To Meet With Israeli Foreign Minister 23 Jul *[Jericho VOP]* 4
Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Adviser Discusses Siege, Jerusalem *[Cairo International]* 4
Palestinian Affairs: 'Violent Clashes' With Israeli Army Under Way in West Bank *[JMCC PRESS SERVICE]* 5
Palestinian Affairs: West Bank Village Under Curfew Following Clashes *[Jerusalem Radio]* . 6
Palestinian Affairs: 'Urayqat Briefs EU Consuls on Settlement 'Onslaught' *[Jericho VOP]* 6
Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Orders Police Not To Release Hirbawi *[Jerusalem Radio]* 6
Palestinian Affairs: Hirbawi Release 'Tonight' Possible; PA-IDF Talks Postponed *[Jerusalem Radio]* 6
Palestinian Affairs: Abu-Zayyad—Ramallah Closure 'Severe Violation' of Accord *[Jerusalem Radio]* 7
Palestinian Affairs: Information Ministry Denounces Siege on Ramallah, al-Birah *[Jericho VOP]* 7
Palestinian Affairs: Statement Issued on Hirbawi Release, Israeli 'Provocations' *[JMCC PRESS SERVICE]* 7
Palestinian Affairs: 'Ashrawi, 'Abd-Rabbuh on Netanyahu Statements *[Jericho VOP]* 8
Palestinian Affairs: PLO Executive Committee, Cabinet Meet 19 Jul *[Jericho VOP]* 10
Palestinian Affairs: Comments on Joint PLO Committee, Cabinet Session *[Jericho VOP]* 11
Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Leader Hamami Urges Opposition To Support 'Arafat *[Jericho VOP]* 11

Arab-Israeli Talks

Arab-Israeli Talks: Israel Said Proposing Secret Talks With Syria *[SHIHAN 20-26 Jul]* 12
Arab-Israeli Talks: Likud MK's, Palestinian Council Members Hold 'Successful' Meeting *[Jerusalem Radio]* 14

ARAB AFRICA

Algeria

Algeria: President Reaffirms Exclusion of FIS From National Dialogue *[Kuwait Radio]* 15
Algeria: New Armed Islamic Group Statement Declares 'Holy War' *[AFP]* 15
Algeria: Daily Views Expulsion of Djamal Zitouni From GIA *[AL-ITTIHAD AL-ISHTIRAKI 16 Jul]* 15
Algeria: Bomb Explosion Kills 5 in Kolea Cafe *[Madrid Radio]* 16
Algeria: 7 Killed, 38 Injured in Kolea Cafe Bombing *[Kuwait Radio]* 16
Algeria: Bomb Explodes Near Blida 21 Jul *[Paris International]* 16

Algeria: Bomb Attack in Bouira Kills 12 *[Paris Teletext]* 17
Algeria: Bus Intercepted at Checkpoint; 12 Passengers Shot *[Paris Radio]* 17

Egypt

Egypt: Mubarak Receives 'Arafat, Delegation *[Cairo Radio]* 17
Egypt: 'Arafat Says Mubarak-Netanyahu Talks Important to Peace *[MENA]* 17
Egypt: Al-Baz Comments on Mubarak-'Arafat Meeting *[MENA]* 17
Egypt: Al-Baz Terms Netanyahu's Cairo Remarks 'Comforting' *[MENA]* 18
Egypt: Commentary Says Netanyahu Visit Generates 'Cautious Optimism' *[Egypt Radio]* 18
Egypt: Paper Says Palestinians Have Political Rights in Jerusalem *[MENA]* 19
Egypt: Official Sees Gradual Shift in Israel's Stance *[MENA]* 19
Egypt: Foreign Minister Musa Leaves for Syria *[MENA]* 19
Egypt: Musa Returns From Syria, Carries Message From al-Asad *[MENA]* 20
Egypt: Mubarak Marks July Revolution Anniversary *[Cairo Radio]* 20
Egypt: Mubarak Phones Chirac on Peace Issues *[MENA]* 22
Egypt: Tension Said To Return to Egyptian-Sudanese Ties *[AL-WAFD 14 Jul]* 23
Egypt: AL-'ARABI Claims Turkey Preparing 'Lightning' Attack on Syria *[15 Jul]* 23
Egypt: Editorial Stresses Egypt's Stance on Jerusalem *[MEMA]* 24

Libya

Libya: Commentary Views Renewal of UN Security Council Measures *[JANA]* 24
Libya: 'Volatility' of al-Qadhdhafi's Sons, Cracks in Regime Noted *[London THE SUNDAY TIMES 21 Jul]* 24

Mauritania

Mauritania: Police Chiefs, Magistrates Arrested in Drug Affair *[Paris International]* 26

Morocco

Morocco: Polisario Leader Reportedly Seeks Asylum in Spain *[MAP]* 26

ARABIAN PENINSULA

Bahrain

Bahrain: Prime Minister Leaves for Kuwait on Official Visit *[WAKH]* 27

Kuwait

Kuwait: Bahrain's Prime Minister Arrives, Gives Statement *[KUNA]* 27
Kuwait: Kuwaiti-Bahraini Talks Begin *[Kuwait Radio]* 27
Kuwait: Council of Ministers Renews Support for Bahrain *[KUNA]* 27
Kuwait: Defense Minister on Rebuilding Army, Shield Force Troops *[KUNA]* 28

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia: Islamic Movement Threatens Further Strikes Against U.S. Forces *[Paris Radio Monte Carlo]* 28
Saudi Arabia: Saudi Militant Group Claims 25 Jun Truck Bombing *[AFP]* 28
Saudi Arabia: Crown Prince, Iranian Ambassador Discuss Bilateral Ties *[IRNA]* 29
Saudi Arabia: Paper Hopes U.S. Will Reconsider 'Bias' Toward Israel *[AL-JAZIRAH 14 Jul]* 29

United Arab Emirates

UAE: Bahraini Premier Arrives on Official Visit *[WAKH]* 29

UAE: Official Talks Held With Bahraini Prime Minister *[WAKH]* 30

IRAQ

Iraq: Iraq Warns U.S. Troops Remain Target in Saudi Arabia *[AFP]* 31
Iraq: Ramadan Terms U.S. 'Hampering' of Agreement 'Fresh Scandal' *[INA]* 31
Iraq: Butrus-Ghali, Al-Anbari on Food, Medicines Plan, Oil Sales *[London AL-HAYAH 19 Jul]* 32
Iraq: AL-THAWRAH Says 'Mask' Fell Off BBC's Face *[INA]* 32
Iraq: Turkey Reportedly Hosts Iraqi-Israeli-Turkish Meeting *[Voice of Rebellious Iraq]* 33
Iraq: Saddam Husayn Chairs Ba'th Party Iraq Command Meeting *[INA]* 33
Iraq: Saddam Chairs Cabinet; Standards, Specifications Discussed *[INA]* 33

ISRAEL

Israel: Levi-'Arafat Meeting 'Apparently' Set for 23 Jul *[Jerusalem Radio]* 34
Israel: Israeli Message to 'Arafat Threatens To Cancel Levi Meeting *[Jerusalem TV]* 34
Israel: Netanyahu Adviser Leaves on 'Secret' Tour of Gulf Emirates *[Jerusalem TV]* 34
Israel: Netanyahu Comments on U.S. Aid to Egypt *[HA'ARETZ 21 Jul]* 34
Israel: South Africa's Mandela Postpones Visit Upon PA Request *[Jerusalem Radio]* 35
Israel: Levi on Cairo Talks, 'Arafat Meeting, Syrian Track *[Jerusalem TV]* 35
Israel: Remains of 2 Israeli Soldiers Arrive From Beirut *[Jerusalem Radio]* 36
Israel: Netanyahu Says Policy on Iran Unchanged Despite Body Swap *[Jerusalem Radio]* 36
Israel: Netanyahu, Germany's Kohl Discuss Ron Arad; Mordekhay Mentions Syria *[Tel Aviv Radio]* 37
Israel: Germany's Schmidbauer Foresees Future Swaps, Vows To Pursue Efforts *[Jerusalem Radio]* 37
Israel: No Information on Arad; No Change in Iranian Policy Seen *[Jerusalem Radio]* 38
Israel: Female Palestinian Prisoners Release Said To Depend on IDF *[THE JERUSALEM POST 22 Jul]* 38
Israel: Palestinian Security Agents Kidnap Israeli Arab to Ramallah *[Jerusalem Radio]* 38
Israel: IDF Demands Release of Israeli Arab by 'Afternoon' of 20 Jul *[Jerusalem Radio]* 38
Israel: Gaza Closure Eased; West Bank Closure Easing Postponed *[Jerusalem Radio]* 39
Israel: IDF Says Ramallah Under Closure Until Release *[Jerusalem Radio]* 39
Israel: Hirbawi To Be Released in 'Hours'; No Decision on Ramallah *[Jerusalem Radio]* 39
Israel: Peres To Pursue Election Fraud Issue, Criticizes Netanyahu *[Jerusalem Radio]* 39
Israel: Peres Urged To Resign, Avoid 'Castrating' Younger Leaders *[THE JERUSALEM POST 22 Jul]* 40
Israel: Labor MK Bar'am Urges Peres To Quit in 'at Least a Year' *[HA'ARETZ 22 Jul]* 40
Israel: SHAS, NRP Threaten To Quit Cabinet Over Religious Portfolio *[THE JERUSALEM POST 22 Jul]* 41
Israel: Likud Settlement Leaders Quit 'Pro-NRP' Settlers Council *[Jerusalem Radio]* 41
Israel; Knesset Committee Lifts Minister Eytan's Immunity *[Jerusalem Radio]* 42
Israel: U.S. Government Criticized for Allowing Syria 'Free Rein' *[THE JERUSALEM POST 22 Jul]* 42
Israel: Russian-Language Daily Urges Clinton To Understand Plight *[NASHA STRANA 17 Jul]* 43
Israel: Press Comments on Outcome of Netanyahu-Mubarak Meeting *[THE JERUSALEM POST 19 Jul, etc.]* 44

JORDAN

Jordan: Prime Minister al-Kabariti Receives Telephone Call From Christopher *[Amman Radio]* 46
Jordan: Al-Kabariti Reportedly Advised Netanyahu To Change 'Tone' *[AL-MAJD 22 Jul]* 46
Jordan: Minister Says Netanyahu's Visit Delayed for Jewish Feast *[Amman Radio]* 46
Jordan: King Husayn Released From London Hospital *[JORDAN TIMES 22 Jul]* 46
Jordan: Al-Kabariti Addresses Marchers on Bread Price Increase *[Amman TV]* 46
Jordan: Information Minister Warns Publishers Against Violating Press Laws *[Amman Radio]* 47

LEBANON

Lebanon: Hizballah Reaches Pacts With Israel on POW Exchange *[Beirut Radio]* 48

Lebanon: Released SLA Prisoners Refuse To Return to Security Zone *[VOL]* 48
Lebanon: Bodies of Two Israeli Soldiers Arrive in Israel From Lebanon *[Beirut Radio]* 48
Lebanon: German Plane Leaves Beirut With Israeli Soldiers' Remains *[Beirut Radio]* 48
Lebanon: Hizballah Chief Comments on POW-Body Exchange *[Beirut Radio]* 49
Lebanon: Syrian Vice President Says No New Israeli Signals on Negotiations *[Beirut Radio]* 49
Lebanon: Khaddam Answers Reporters' Questions in Zahlah, Departs *[Damascus TV]* 50
Lebanon: Buwayz Discusses Monitoring Committee, Israeli Withdrawal *[Beirut Radio]* 51
Lebanon: Buwayz Reiterates 'Interconnected' Lebanese-Syrian Tracks *[Damascus Radio]* 51
Lebanon: Buwayz Sees 'Partial' Israeli Withdrawal as 'Useless' *[London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 20 Jul]* 52
Lebanon: Hizballah Deputy Says Resistance To Continue *[Tehran Radio]* 52
Lebanon: Israelis, 'Resistance' Exchange Gunfire in South *[Beirut Radio]* 52
Lebanon: Radio Reports Israeli Shelling, Overflights *[Beirut Radio]* 53

SYRIA

Syria: Press on Europe's Peace Role, 'Losing Wager' on Netanyahu *[Damascus Radio]* 54
Syria: Netanyahu's Policy Called 'Nightmare' for Peace *[Damascus Radio]* 55
Syria: Damascus Condemns Israeli Bid To Impose 'Torah Logic' *[Damascus Radio]* 56
Syria: 'Some Differences' With Egypt Reported *[Paris Radio Monte Carlo]* 56
Syria: Egypt's Musa Conveys Mubarak Message to al-Asad, Departs *[Damascus Radio]* 56
Syria: Radio Commentary Discusses Conditions To Resume Peace Talks *[Damascus Radio]* 57
Syria: Al-Asad's Hold on Power Considered Precarious *[Istanbul NOKTA 29 Jun]* 58

SOUTH ASIA

Afghanistan

Afghanistan: President, Prime Minister Make New Appointments *[Kabul Radio]* 61
Afghanistan: Spokesman Denies Military Support for Tajik Opposition *[Tehran International]* 61

India

India: Delhi Firm on CTBT Proposal, Against U.S. 'Hooliganism' *[HINDUSTAN 18 Jul]* 61
India: Report Claims U.S. Continues To 'Pressure' Nation on CTBT *[THE TELEGRAPH 20 Jul]* 62
India: CTBT Makes India 'Perennially Inferior' Unless Veto Exercised *[BUSINESS STANDARD 20 Jul]* 63
India: Official—No-War Talks Offer May Be 'Political Gesture' *[THE TIMES OF INDIA 18 Jul]* 64
India: Report Views Entry Into ASEAN Regional Forum *[THE HINDU 19 Jul]* 65
India: Delhi To Press for Membership of APEC Working Groups *[INDIAN EXPRESS 20 Jul]* 66
India: Parliament Questions 'Attitude' of Kashmir Governor *[Delhi Radio]* 67
India: Article Views Congress-BSP Alliance *[AJ 4 Jul]* 67

Iran

Iran Offers Condolences to TWA Crash Victim's Families *[AFP]* 69
Iran: Iranian Embassy Link To TWA Plane Crash *[Tehran International]* 69
Iran: French Weekly Reports Opening of Tehran 'Terror' Summit *[Tel Aviv Radio]* 70
Iran: Editorial Urges 'Common Strategy' Against Oppression *[IRAN NEWS 16 Jul]* 70
Iran: Paper Accuses Iran of Anti-Bahrain Activities in London *[London THE SUNDAY TELEGRAPH 21 Jul]* 71
Iran: Deputy Foreign Minister Visits Turkey, Meets Ministers *[Tehran Radio]* 72
Iran: Editorial Stresses Importance of Ties to Turkey *[IRAN NEWS 17 Jul]* 72
Iran: Mubarak 'Beaten to Ground' by 'Active' Syrian Diplomacy *[SALAM 10 Jul]* 73

Iran: Iranian Aide in Cairo Rejects Egypt's 'Terrorism' Charge *[London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 19 Jul]* 74
Iran: German Official Praises Iran's Role in POW Exchange Deal *[IRNA]* 74
Iran: German Prosecutor Attacked for Slander *[KAR VA KARGAR 17 Mar]* 74
Iran: Rafsanjani, Pakistani Speaker Discuss Kashmir Issue *[Tehran TV]* 75
IRAN: Pakistani Assembly Speaker Addresses Majles *[Tehran TV]* 75
Iran: Chechen Crisis May Bury Russian Credibility in Muslim World *[IRNA]* 76
Iran: Commentator Discusses Russian Role in Tajikistan Peace *[ABRAR 16 Jul]* 76
Iran: Press Confirms Unrest in Tabriz *[London KEYHAN 23 May]* 77
Iran: Editorial Views Mandela's Visit to Britain *[KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL 17 Jul]* 78
Iran: Foreign Ministry Responds to Criticism of Policy *[IRAN 16 Jul]* 78
Iran: Daily Lauds Iran's 'Successful' Foreign Policy *[ABRAR 14 Jul]* 79
Iran: Editorial Urges 'Aggressive' Foreign Policy *[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI 13 Jul]* 81
Iran: Rafsanjani Hails 'Splendid Reception' in Hamadan Visit *[Tehran TV]* 81
Iran: Cabinet Approves Change in Law on Cooperatives *[Tehran TV]* 82
Iran: Qom Environmental Pollution Reported *[KAR VA KARGAR 3 Apr]* 82
Iran: Latest Food Prices Listed *[London KEYHAN 23 May]* 83
Iran: Price of Couponed Items Increases *[London KEYHAN 23 May]* 83
Iran: Annual Road Construction Detailed *[RESALAT 27 Feb]* 83

Pakistan

Pakistan: Foreign Minister Comments on CTBT, Relations With India *[Islamabad TV]* 84
Pakistan: European Commission Team, Leaders Discuss Cooperation *[Islamabad Radio]* 84
Pakistan: Government Gives 9-Point Package of Concessions to FPCCI *[THE NATION 19 Jul]* 84
Pakistan: Strike, Violence in Kashmir; Leaders Reject Elections *[Islamabad Radio]* 85
Pakistan: Terrorist Bomb Blast at Lahore Airport *[AFP]* 86
Pakistan: Report Details Chaudhri Nisar, Altaf Hussain Meeting *[DAWN 18 Jul]* 86

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: LTTE Claim 800 Soldiers Killed in Garrison Offensive *[AFP]* 87
Sri Lanka: Military Spokesman Denies LTTE Overran Military Base *[DAILY NEWS 20 Jul]* . 87
Sri Lanka: LTTE Reports Attack on Mullaitivu Army Garrison *[Tamil Eelam News WWW]* ... 88
Sri Lanka: Report Details Latest Government, LTTE Fighting *[SUNDAY OBSERVER 21 Jul]* 89
Sri Lanka: LTTE—Mullaitivu Military Camp Under 'Full LTTE Control' *[Tamil Eelam News WWW]* 89

Islamic Affairs

Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 12 Jul

NC2107102696

[FBIS Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 12 July edition of the Cairo Arabic language newspaper AL-SHA'B that pertain to political Islamic issues.

CONTENTS:

1. Writer Suspects U.S. Pressure Foiled Thaw With Iran
2. Spy Recruitment Seen as Israeli Plan To Ignite Religious Strife
3. Labor's Husayn Explains Change of Tone in Addressing Government
4. Labor Party Discusses Current Issues, Missiles
5. Denunciations of Assault on Chief Editor Continue
6. Editor Urges New Investigation Into Finances of Minister's Son
7. Netanyahu Said Making Demands in Return for Supporting Clinton
8. Clash Between King and Islamists Said Imminent in Jordan

WRITER SUSPECTS U.S. PRESSURE FOILED THAW WITH IRAN

A 1,250-word article by Muna Yasin on page 7 says that Syria's good offices to improve relations between Egypt and Iran, despite a very auspicious beginning, suffered a major setback after Mubarak accused Iran of carrying out operations against Egypt and other Arab countries and denied that ministerial level meetings between the two countries had been held.

Yasin tries to analyze the Egyptian change of heart toward the Syrian mediation and prospect of a thaw with Iran. Writing under the headlines "A Huge Step Back in Egyptian-Iranian relations. Did U.S. Pressures Thwart the Syrian Mediation?", she rules out the possibility that Egypt is really angry because of suspected Iranian involvement in terrorist actions against it or that Egypt is afraid that the Arab Gulf countries would resent an Egyptian-Iranian rapprochement, if only because these countries are not averse to reconciliation with Iran themselves. She is left with a "third explanation," namely Egypt's wish to "avoid a new crisis with the United States, which does not look with favor on any improvement in ties between two of the region's largest countries."

The writer says that U.S.-Egyptian relations have been "tense" ever since the Cairo Arab summit was held and Egypt, following the pressures exerted on it in connection with the "alleged issue of missiles," is therefore "unwilling to provoke a new crisis with the United States."

Yasin says it is well known that the United States initially wanted to win Egyptian support for sanctions against Iran, considers any Arab-Iranian reconciliation as a "breach in the wall of the U.S. siege against Iran," and is suspicious of any rapprochement among the region's countries particularly if these countries are Egypt, Syria, and Iran.

She concludes: "Perhaps the U.S. role in this case was not very direct, but it cannot be entirely ruled out. Perhaps it was at the back of Egypt's mind when it took this step backward."

SPY RECRUITMENT SEEN AS ISRAELI PLAN TO IGNITE RELIGIOUS STRIFE

On pages 1 and 8 there is an 800-word report by Subhi Buhayri on the arrest of an Egyptian national called Makram Jirjis Bulus, 21, on charges of spying for Israel. Apart from noting that the suspect "fell into the security services' hands" before he could even use the radio set seized with him, there is a dearth of information in the report about the particulars of the case and the circumstances surrounding the arrest. No exact date is given, but the impression is that the arrest is recent.

Conversely, a lot of information is given about the reported spy's family life and home village of Mit Khaqan, in al-Minufiyah Governorate, which he left to work in a Cairo hotel. He has a brother, Bulus Jirjis, who recently completed his military service, a mother who is a "paragon of what an Egyptian mother should be" and who "has friendly relations with all the other women of her village, both Muslim and Christian." His father is living in Italy, visits Egypt twice a year, and appears to be well off.

The report focuses on the suspect's religious affiliation and accuses the Israeli intelligence service of intentionally recruiting a Christian to provoke religious strife in a village that has numerous Christian families, but which also has "a strong Islamist presence comprising members of the Muslim Brotherhood." The writer says that "the spy's actions have confused all the citizens of the village who cannot believe that Mit Khaqan is an area targeted by the Israeli Mosad."

He continues: "This made the Muslim and Christian young men in the village issue a statement—being distributed right now— emphasizing that the whole affair is a vile action by one idiotic person. The statement says that perhaps the Israeli enemy wishes to inflame religious strife in the village, which has not seen one provocation ever since an incident 17 years ago that ended in closer amity among the villages' Muslims and Christians."

LABOR'S HUSAYN EXPLAINS CHANGE OF TONE IN ADDRESSING GOVERNMENT

In a 5,500-word report on page 5, Labor Party Secretary General 'Adil Husayn discusses a wide range of issues under the united theme of the Labor Party's stance toward the Egyptian Government and the extent to which this party and the Islamist opposition would like the Egyptian Government to amend its policies.

He begins by declaring that the change in his tone of address to the government is because the government has achieved some of the things he used to advocate, but he still wishes it would do more.

"Some people have failed to understand the significance of the change in our tone of address to the rulers. To such people I say: The Labor Party has not changed its principles to draw closer to the government. What happened was that the government has drawn close to the essential issues that we have been advocating for several years. When something like this happens, we can only support this new government policy and try to consolidate and develop it. We are not in the opposition for the mere pleasure of opposing."

Husayn declares that the Arab nation's major enemy is "the U.S.- Zionist alliance" and that a "friendly and nice" Egypt has failed to produce economic prosperity, but on the contrary suffered economic and military weakness and helped fragment the Arab nation.

He praises the Arab summit held in Cairo and disagrees with those who regard the Egyptian Government's attitude to the "U.S.-Zionist alliance" as mere talk. He says that the Arab summit was not a mere "literary seminar" but was a meeting of Arab leaders that produced a united stand vis-a-vis the "Arab-Zionist conflict." It also prevented the isolation of Syria, and brought Hizballah, Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], Islamic Jihad, Libya, and Sudan into the Arab ranks. Hence, he declares, the summit was a "historic political achievement."

He says he might understand the reasons for delaying an Arab- Iranian reconciliation in view "of the U.S.-Zionist hardline attitude" on this issue, but regrets the failure to settle the Egyptian-Sudanese dispute.

Husayn says that Russia, the EU, particularly France, and China resist U.S. positions and that this must be exploited by changing Europe's "sick dreams and black fears of Islam." He calls for exploiting Europe's contradictions with the "U.S.-Zionist alliance" and changing its attitudes to the "Islamic awakening." He notes that dialogue alone is not enough to change European attitudes towards Islam and what is needed is for the Arabs to become "a wise power," something that need not be merely military but that should be founded on astute domestic and foreign policies. Nevertheless, he praises the Egyptian Armed Forces' acquisition of new Scuds and says that this improves the military balance with Israel, since "Israeli skies are now open to Arab and Iranian missiles, which will threaten it from all sides if it tries to intimidate or blackmail us." He adds that because of "our missiles, Israel is no longer arrogantly vain but is actually frightened."

On domestic policies, 'Adil Husayn gives Kamal al-Janzuri's government slightly better marks than the former government of 'Atif Sidqi but urges it to make the country's economy rely more on agriculture and industry than on tourism and to abandon "the policies of subservience to the IMF and the United States."

He calls on the government to carry out political reform, beginning by accepting court decisions invalidating the election results for many People's Assembly seats.

He concludes by urging closer ties with Islamists, noting that Turkey now has an Islamist party in power, Sudan has a government system based on shari'ah, Syria has released jailed Islamists, and the Iraqi Ba'th Party has abandoned its secular positions and is making "Islamist affiliation the foundation of membership in its ranks."

He asks: "Is it reasonable for Egypt alone to remain hostile to the call to establish a government based on God's revelation?"

LABOR PARTY DISCUSSES CURRENT ISSUES, MISSILES

A 700-word item on pages 1 and 8 reports a statement issued by the Labor Party's Political Bureau following a meeting on 9 July. The statement denounces the physical assault on AL-SHA'B chief editor Majdi Husayn and says that it will hold the Interior Ministry responsible for any repetitions of such assaults.

Discussing the situation in Turkey, it says that it appreciates the circumstances that forced the new Turkish Government of Necmettin Erbakan to place restrictions on its Islamist policies because of coalition considerations and expects it to do better in future elections. It calls for an exchange of visits with Refah Party members.

On other issues, the political bureau urges the development of collective Arab defense and economic strategies to confront the policies of the new Israeli Government, declares that Egypt has a legal right to develop its missile system because it is not bound by any treaty banning it from doing so, and advocates improvement of ties with Iran and Sudan.

DENUNCIATIONS OF ASSAULT ON CHIEF EDITOR CONTINUE

AL-SHA'B continues in this issue to comment on the beating up of chief editor Majdi Husayn, in which the paper says Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi is implicated. A statement by the Labor Party's Political Bureau in a report on pages 1 and 8 condemns the attack. Page 2 is taken up by two articles and three reports on the issue. A 2,000-word report by Khalid Yunus tells of a solidarity conference held at the Journalists Association headquarters on 10 July, under the motto "The assault on Majdi Husayn will not frighten us."

A 600-word article by 'Ala' al-Aswani says Majdi Husayn was assaulted because he is exposing the "widespread corruption in the state's institutions." The writer says "the barbaric assault on Majdi Husayn is a reminder of the type of state in which we live. We must be on our guard: Even if the government is carrying out important and respected national tasks, we must also remember that corrupt and heavy-handed governments carry within themselves the seeds of defeat, regardless of any good intentions."

A 500-word article by Ahmad Thabit ridicules the attribution of attacks like the one on Majdi Husayn to "unidentified" assailants and calls for an extensive judicial inquiry into attacks on journalists.

One of the remaining two reports lists the cables of solidarity that Majdi Husayn received and the other reviews the condemnation of the attack in the opposition press including AL-'ARABI and AL-AHRAR.

Two cartoons on page 2 link the interior minister to the attack. One shows two members of the public walking past a doorway with a sentry standing in front of it. A plaque reads: "The stay-away- from-here company of al-Alfi and his partners." One of the passers by is saying to the other: "Do you remember when this was a ministry?"

The other cartoon shows a collection of high rise buildings with an ornate shrine in front of them with a plaque reading: "The Holy Shrine of Our Master al-Alfi, formerly the Interior Ministry." In front of the building complex is a stack of huge money bags with dollar signs on them.

A cartoon on page 6 shows a pharaonic plaque with fake hieroglyphics and a likeness of Hasan al-Alfi. A smaller plaque in Arabic carries this mock inscription: "The Pharaoh Alfi-Hatab. He triumphed over the newspaper editors in the battle of Balta-Ji in the late 20th century." "Baltaji" is a colloquial Arabic word for cutthroat.

EDITOR URGES NEW INVESTIGATION INTO FINANCES OF MINISTER'S SON

A 250-word item on page 1 says that chief editor Majdi Husayn has submitted a new report to the Illegal Earnings Investigation Administration urging new investigation into the sources of the wealth of 'Ala al-Alfi, the interior minister's son.

The report declares that Majdi Husayn has "no personal quarrel with the interior minister's son that would make him harm him without good cause."

Although brief, the report is typed in large print and spread on three columns in the center of page 1.

NETANYAHU SAID MAKING DEMANDS IN RETURN FOR SUPPORTING CLINTON

This issue's lead story is a 650-word report by Mahmud Bakri on page 1 which says that Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu submitted 21 economic and military demands to President Bill Clinton during his recent visit to Washington. Bakri writes that "AL-SHA'B has learned" that Netanyahu linked the fulfillment of these demands to U.S. Jewish backing for a second term for Clinton.

The report adds that Netanyahu promised, in return for "unlimited U.S. support for Israel's policies in the region," to call on U.S. Jewish leaders to enlist the media to help Clinton in his reelection bid on the grounds that he is "Israel's primary friend and backer."

The story carries a large banner headline in blue, reading: "The Omens of War Loom Over the Region."

CLASH BETWEEN KING AND ISLAMISTS SAID IMMINENT IN JORDAN

A 500-word article, signed with the initials "M.J.A." in the "Developments of the Events" column on page 7 says that a clash between the Jordanian Government "egged on by the King" and the Islamists is "imminent". The writer says that the Jordanian authorities are persecuting the Islamists, torturing their detainees in jail, disregarding the demands of Islamist deputies in the House of Representatives, and heeding Israeli incitements, including an accusation that the Islamists aided a recent attack on Israeli troops near the Jordanian border and another accusation that the Islamists support the Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas. He adds that the Islamists, for their turn, have threatened to carry out extensive public demonstrations and "a campaign of civil disobedience" to protest the government's "torture" of young Islamist men in jail and its plan to raise bread prices, something which the Islamists consider "a red line."

M.J.A. writes: "It seems that the Islamists' recent actions have been backed by popular discontent with the economic conditions, which have deteriorated since the peace treaty was signed with the Zionists, rather than improving as the government promised."

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Holds Talks With Mubarak in Cairo

JN2007121696 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1100 GMT 20 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat held talks with Egyptian President Husni Mubarak in Cairo today.

They discussed the results of the talks Mubarak held with Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu in Cairo on Thursday [18 July].

Muhammad Subayh, Palestine's representative at the Arab League, said the meeting also dealt with ways to implement the peace agreements signed by the Palestinian and Israeli sides.

The meeting was attended on the Palestinian side by Dr. Nabil Sha'th, minister of planning and international cooperation, and Nabil Abu-Rudaynah, adviser to the president. It was attended on the Egyptian side by 'Amr Musa, the foreign minister, and Usamah al-Baz, head of the Egyptian president's office.

President Yasir 'Arafat is scheduled to return home later today.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Returns Home After 'Important' Talks With Mubarak

JN2007190596 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1800 GMT 20 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat returned home this afternoon after a visit to Alexandria, Egypt. During the visit, he held important talks with Egyptian President Husni Mubarak.

President 'Arafat stated that he and President Mubarak discussed how the peace process can be advanced. In response to a question on the results of Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's visit to Egypt on 18 July, the president said: We have to wait and see. The most important thing is how what was agreed upon and signed will be implemented.

Before departing Alexandria, the president expressed thanks for President Mubarak for the great attention he shows for Arab issues in general and the Palestinian issue in particular.

Palestinian Affairs: AFP—Details of 'Arafat 25 Jul Trip to Damascus

NC2207104596 Paris AFP in English 1025 GMT 22 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Gaza City, July 22 (AFP)—Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat is to visit Syria for the first time in three years on Thursday [25 July] for talks with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, his office announced Monday.

"'Arafat will travel to Damascus on July 25 to meet President al-Asad as part of an Arab concerted and coordinated effort following the Cairo summit which was a major success," his adviser Nabil Abu-Rudaynah told AFP. He said it would be a "very important meeting."

Relations between the Palestinians and Syria soured as the PLO signed the Declaration of Principles with Israel in September 1993 launching Palestinian autonomy. Al-Asad accused 'Arafat of breaking Arab ranks by signing a separate deal with the Jewish state.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat To Meet With Israeli Foreign Minister 23 Jul

JN1907203296 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1800 GMT 19 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat is expected to meet with Israeli Foreign Minister David Levi near Erez crossing on 23 July. Talks will deal with ways to continue the peace process, resuming the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, and implementing what was agreed on between the National Authority and the Israeli Government.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Adviser Discusses Siege, Jerusalem

NC2207081696 Cairo Voice of the Arabs in Arabic 0510 GMT 22 Jul 96

[Telephone interview with Dr. Ahmad al-Tibi, political adviser to PA Chairman Yasir 'Arafat, in Jerusalem, by Fayiz al-Miliji in Cairo on 22 July; from the "Dialogue From Afar" program—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Al-Miliji] Dr. Ahmad, can you tell us the real situation concerning the lifting of the siege on the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza?

[Al-Tibi] The siege is still imposed, particularly in the West Bank, despite media statements on the extension of facilities. Although some cars have been allowed to enter, no radical change has been made concerning the security cordon [Tawq] imposed on the Palestinian territories, be it in the West Bank or in Gaza. The area of Ramallah has been besieged and closed for the past 48 hours by the Israeli occupation forces.

[Al-Miliji] But Israeli radio said that according to the measures, 10,000 workers from the West Bank and Gaza will be allowed to enter Israel assuming that they are aged over 30.

[Al-Tibi] This is the information from the Israeli side. But the 10,000 have not entered Israel to date. Permits for 5,000 or 10,000 workers are not a principal issue. I consider this a secondary issue. The main issue is: What is this Israeli Government's policy toward the peace process? Its policy on daily life matters, such as the closure and other areas. This is an important issue, but the main issue rests in the future of the peace process and whether the new Israeli Government will be committed to reaching an agreement acceptable by all the sides concerning the final-status negotiations. So far statements made by the Israeli side, especially by Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, cast doubts on this matter.

[Al-Miliji] Palestinian sources said the Israeli authorities have begun withdrawing identity cards from Jerusalem citizens living abroad as part of its continuing policy to Judaize the holy city and empty it of its Arab population. We want you to give us some details on this issue.

[Al-Tibi] This is true. An israeli campaign was launched several months ago to withdraw identity cards from the Palestinians in East Jerusalem.

[Al-Miliji] Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu visited Cairo recently. This was followed by Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat's visit to Cairo and his talks with President Husni Mubarak. It has also been announced that Israeli Foreign Minister David Levi will meet President 'Arafat on Tuesday [23 July]. Can you brief us on developments with the Israeli side following President Mubarak's talks with Netanyahu?

[Al-Tibi] The meeting between President Husni Mubarak and Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu was important. We hope these meetings will contribute toward advancing the peace process and changing the Israeli point of view. Most likely there will be a meeting between President Yasir 'Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister David Levi tomorrow. This is the first meeting on the ministerial level. This meeting will deal with the entire peace process and the outstanding issues in the bilateral negotiations. The Palestinian side wants to know how committed the Israeli side is to respecting all that has been agreed upon and the Israeli side's view concerning the negotiations on the final status of Jerusalem.

[Al-Miliji] Dr. Ahmad, has the meeting between President 'Arafat and David Levi been arranged?

[Al-Tibi] The Israeli foreign minister asked to meet President 'Arafat, who welcomed the request. The two sides will discuss every issue.

[Al-Miliji] Do we expect an announcement after this meeting that the negotiations will be resumed?

[Al-Tibi] There is a dire need to resume the negotiations. This meeting moves things in the right direction.

[Al-Miliji] The French foreign minister will visit Jerusalem, most notably Orient House, as part of his Middle East tour. Did you contact the French side in this regard?

[Al-Tibi] The French side and French diplomacy are in constant contact with the Palestinian Authority [PA] and with the brothers in Orient House. The French foreign minister will be accorded a warm reception when he visits Orient House. We respect his statements and stances in this regard.

[Al-Miliji] After President Mubarak's talks with Netanyahu, the news conference that followed the talks, and Netanyahu's remarks during the news conference, and in light of the expected meeting between President 'Arafat and David Levi, can you tell us where the Palestinian track is in the peace process?

[Al-Tibi] There are many questions concerning the land-for-peace principle, the issue of settlements, and Jerusalem, questions that have not yet been answered by Netanyahu in a way that satisfies the Palestinian or Arab side. It is essential to continue [word indistinct] the Israeli side.

[Al-Miliji] Thank you Dr. al-Tibi.

[Al-Tibi] You are welcome.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Violent Clashes' With Israeli Army Under Way in West Bank

TA1907135496 Jerusalem JMCC PRESS SERVICE in English 0815 GMT 19 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Violent clashes between Palestinians and Israeli soldiers are taking place in Turmus 'Ayya village. Yesterday the Nationalist-Islamist Anti-Settlement Committee, based in Ramallah, called for a demonstration this morning against the expansion of Shilo settlement, between Ramallah and Nabulus. Villagers from Qaryut and Turmus 'Ayya gathered to protest.

It was reported that the villagers burned a field belonging to the settlement. Soldiers were reportedly firing in the air to disperse the crowds. It was also reported that two journalists were injured by Israeli solders.

In Hebron, Palestinians lobbed five bottles of acid at an Israeli post in the center of Hebron. No damage was reported. Today was called to be a day of demonstrations by the pro-Fatah Popular Committees in Hebron.

Palestinian Affairs: West Bank Village Under Curfew Following Clashes

TA1907192196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1900 GMT 19 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Here is an update on the clash between the residents of the village of Qaryut and the settlers from the Shilo area: This evening, the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] imposed a curfew on the village, and military sources told our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem that the army and the Civil Administration will look for ways to settle the land dispute between the parties. The police will investigate the settlers' conduct. They rioted, fired in the air, and beat up Palestinian photographers.

The IDF spokesman told our correspondent Gil Litman that the Palestinians were demonstrating near the fields outside Shilo in protest against the seizure of their lands and, at a certain stage, they began to riot, entered the fields, and damaged property. Several settlers from Shilo arrived at the site, clashed with the demonstrators, and smashed the windows of their cars. The settlers told our correspondent that an IDF unit that was at the site did not intervene when the demonstrators invaded their fields. The IDF spokesman, however, said that the soldiers sought to calm tempers and break up the fights.

Two Palestinians — a woman and a Palestinian photographer — were injured in the incident. One was taken to a hospital in Nabulus and the other in Jerusalem.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Urayqat Briefs EU Consuls on Settlement 'Onslaught'

JN1907200896 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1800 GMT 19 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Local Administration Minister Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat met with a number of the EU consuls today to brief them on the Israeli settlement onslaught in the West Bank, including occupied Jerusalem, and the effect of this onslaught on the peace process.

'Urayqat told the European consuls that peace and Israeli settlements do not go together. He called on the EU states to intervene immediately to stop the Israeli onslaught and to save the peace process.

The local administration minister stressed the need to resume the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations and to hold an immediate meeting of the Higher Liaison and Steering Committee.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Orders Police Not To Release Hirbawi

TA2107105396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 21 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The order not to release 'Abd-al-Salam Hirbawi, abducted by the Palestinian Police from East Jerusalem to Ramallah yesterday, was issued by Yasir 'Arafat. Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports that 'Arafat's decision was the result of his promise to Egypt to support the Coptic Church's side in its conflict with Hirbawi, who lives near the church.

A senior source in the Palestinian security services accuses the Jordanian security services of involvement in the affair. He asserts that they persuaded Hirbawi to lodge a complaint with Israel Police against construction in the Coptic Church area.

The Palestinian Security Services are trying to persuade Hirbawi, whom they are holding, to recall his petition to the court and to accept Palestinian arbitration.

As a result of the conflict with the Palestinians in this matter, the Central Command chief this morning decided to stay the implementation of the decision to ease the closure on Judaea and Samaria. A closure was imposed on Ramallah yesterday.

Palestinian Affairs: Hirbawi Release 'Tonight' Possible; PA-IDF Talks Postponed

TA2107142896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1400 GMT 21 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A senior source in the Palestinian Authority [PA] said he anticipates positive developments in the case of 'Abd-al-Salam Hirbawi's abduction to Ramallah. The source said that Yasir 'Arafat has adopted a more flexible position, and it is possible that Hirbawi may be released tonight.

At the same time, our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports that this evening's scheduled meeting between Major General Gabi Ofir, commander of the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] troops in Judaea and Samaria, and the heads of the Palestinian Police has been postponed. The Palestinian source told our correspondent that the meeting was postponed for technical reasons.

Palestinian Affairs: Abu-Zayyad—Ramallah Closure 'Severe Violation' of Accord

TA2107154596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1400 GMT 21 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A Palestinian Legislative Council member has called for the immediate release of an Israeli Arab abducted by Palestinian security forces from his East Jerusalem home. The Israeli Government demanded the release of 'Abd-al-Salam Hirbawi after he was forcibly taken from his home yesterday over a land dispute with the Coptic Church in Jerusalem. Council member Ziyad Abu-Zayyad says though Palestinian forces may have acted in contravention of peace agreements, Israel's reaction — sealing off Ramallah and delaying a planned easing of the closure — also constitutes a violation. Ziyad Abu-Zayyad was talking to Amy Rhodes.

[Begin recording] [Abu-Zayyad] I think that this Israeli action — closing Ramallah — is by itself a severe violation of the agreement signed between us and Israel because, according to the agreement, if there are any problems, these problems should be raised within the framework of the liaison committee. And the Israelis, instead of punishing all the people of Ramallah and all the people of Jerusalem and the West Bank and not allowing them to enter Ramallah or not allowing people to come outside Ramallah, they should try to be more specific. There is a problem with one person from Jerusalem. The problem should be raised immediately within the liaison committee, within the proper channels which were set up between the Palestinian Authority [PA] and Israel. But the Israelis cannot always behave in this logic of power: That the Palestinians understand only power and, therefore, we should seal Ramallah area and impose a closure on Ramallah or we will stop implementing the easing of the closure. This is inciting the Palestinian population. It is a violation of the agreement.

[Rhodes] Yes, but wasn't the arrest of this man, abducting him from his home in Jerusalem, also a severe violation, and were the Palestinians not exercising their power, showing their rights?

[Abu-Zayyad] Listen, you cannot correct a mistake by committing a more awful mistake. If the Palestinian security men violated the agreement by arresting this person from Jerusalem and bringing him to Ramallah, if this is a mistake, it should not be corrected by other mistakes such as imposing a curfew or a closure on Ramallah or stopping or freezing the implementation of some measures to ease the closure. You cannot commit something like that. You come and say: Listen, this is a violation. Why did you do it?

[Rhodes] How do you see this situation being resolved?

[Abu-Zayyad] Well, first of all I believe that this man should be released immediately without any further delay, and I believe that, for the future, any issue which comes up.... [pauses] We are involved in a very complicated agreement in which every day we expect problems and misunderstandings. I believe that all these things should be brought immediately to the liaison committee but allowing, at the same time, the agreement to continue and to be implemented and respected by both sides. [end recording]

Palestinian Affairs: Information Ministry Denounces Siege on Ramallah, al-Birah

JN2107161196 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1300 GMT 21 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Information Ministry denounced the tight military siege imposed on Ramallah and al-Birah for the second consecutive day.

In a statement issued today, the Ministry considered this arbitrary measure as a ridiculous and astonishing show of force. Holding an entire people hostage does not fit the language of the age and the free world.

The Ministry noted that this measure shows how the Israeli Government will deal with the controversial issues of negotiations. It added that this is tantamount to an Israeli message calling on the Palestinian side to disregard the Israeli violations and blackmail, which are beyond imagination.

Palestinian Affairs: Statement Issued on Hirbawi Release, Israeli 'Provocations'

TA2107191296 Jerusalem JMCC PRESS SERVICE in English 1830 GMT 21 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] JMCC learned that the PA [Palestinian Authority] Preventive Security apparatus will release 'Abd-al-Salam Hirbawi at 9.30 pm [1830 GMT]. He will be handed over to the District Coordination Office (DCO) in Ramallah.

Following is a statement from "an official spokesman in the preventive security: based on orders of president Yasir 'Arafat, 'Abd-al-Salam Hirbawi was released after being arrested for resolving a dispute between the Islamic Waqf and the Coptic church through physical violence and resorting to Israeli courts. This contradicts Islamic and Arab traditions, specially since the Copt brothers are guests of the Palestinian people and the National Authority. 'Abd-al-Salam Hirbawi's release was the result of his family's appeal and after he gave his word to resolve the conflict inside the Palestinian house by closing the window at the heart of the conflict and work to end the problem without resorting to any non Palestinian intervention. He expressed his regret for resorting to the Israeli courts and made the excuse that some employees of the Islamic Waqf encouraged him for dubious reasons and they ignored the religious tensions that might result from this stupid behavior.

The spokesman condemned, in the name of the preventive security, the Israeli closure of Ramallah and considered it one in a series of provocations that started when (Israel) intervened in a conflict between the Coptic church and Islamic Waqf to fan the fire of sectarianism between Muslims and Christians in the land of Palestine, the land of religious tolerance.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Ashrawi, 'Abd-Rabbuh on Netanyahu Statements

JN2007133496 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0416 GMT 20 Jul 96

[Telephone interview with Palestinian Culture Minister Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh and Education Minister Dr. Hanan 'Ashrawi by Fathi al-Barqawi in the Voice of Palestine studio; from the "A New Day" feature — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Barqawi] I have Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh, PLO Executive Committee member and culture minister, and Education Minister Dr. Hanan 'Ashrawi on the telephone. Good morning to both of you.

['Ashrawi, 'Abd-Rabbuh] Good morning to you.

[Al-Barqawi] I believe I made a mistake because I did not tell each of you that the other was on the air. Good morning, once again. Mr. Yasir: Egyptian President Husni Mubarak met Netanyahu. There is no doubt that the Council of Ministers and the PLO Executive Committee assessed this meeting yesterday. How did the Palestinians assess the meeting?

['Abd-Rabbuh] We did not complete the assessment. Brother President Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] will visit Cairo today to meet with President Mubarak, who will brief him on the details of his meeting with the Israeli prime minister in Cairo. However, when we review Mr. Netanyahu's declared stands and statements, we find that he made no real commitment concerning the continuation of the peace process, the agreements signed, and the bases on which the peace process is based. If we study Mr. Netanyahu's statements and stands at the news conference, we find that there is procrastination and an attempt to dodge the issue by declaring ambiguous stands that allow for many interpretations. From this premise, I believe there was no basic change, and one should not start believing that Netanyahu has started to change his stands—his extremist stands and his disavowal of the peace process and its bases. I also believe the Arabs and the international community must remain wary and not fall victim to ambiguous stands and slogans. There should also be a real test to determine if there is any change, a test that will show whether there are practical steps on the ground. It suffices us here to mention the massacre against Qaryut village yesterday. It was a massacre of an entire village in which the occupation forces joined the settlers in opening fire on the defenseless inhabitants of the village just because they were defending their usurped land. I believe that the signs are definitely not positive. All that is required is to maintain the Palestinian, Arab, and international preparedness and to plan Palestinian and Arab policy on this basis.

[Al-Barqawi] Dr. Hanan, Mr. 'Abd-Rabbuh said the signs are definitely not positive. You said yesterday that Netanyahu still tries to impose his priorities on the peace process.

['Ashrawi] Yes.

[Al-Barqawi] Will we accept this imposition on the Arab, international, Islamic level, and on the Palestinian level?

['Ashrawi] I believe there is an Arab and international stand that has started to crystallize not only on questioning the statements and rhetoric of Netanyahu and the new Israeli Government —Netanyahu approaches the media as the forum through which he can control reactions—but also on assessing, as brother Abu-Bashshar said, what takes place on the ground. What is important is what is implemented and not what one says. This is an essential issue. The Palestinians and the Arab world have the will and the tools to ascertain if there really is a change or if there is a genuine commitment. This can be ascertained through the following: first, by the acceptance of or the abidance by the terms of reference of the peace process and not seeking to change it or impose one's own interpretation of it; second, by desisting from practices that conflict with the bases and principles and objectives of the peace process; third, by initiating real negotiations without changing the timetable of the final-status negotiations, and implementing and not reassessing or renegotiating the issues having to do with the interim stage. These are the basis issues. The real test has to do with the settlement activities, which continue to escalate, as we saw yesterday, not to mention the measures on Jerusalem. This is a crucial issue for us, for the Arab world, and for the world in general, particularly for Europe, not to mention the issues of closure and collective punishment.

Netanyahu tried to give the impression that he is committed by changing his tone, but the facts on the ground contradict this.

[Al-Barqawi] Brother Abu-Bashshar, on the basis of what Dr. Hanan said about the redefinition of the terms of reference, is Netanyahu saying the principle of land for peace should be renegotiated?

['Abd-Rabbuh] Netanyahu wants us to become involved in a game of words and in media competition, as Dr. Hanan said. The issue is not of definition and redefinition. This is not a mental exercise or a press seminar with Netanyahu to look for definitions, bases, and other things. Several years separate us from Madrid. The bases are clear, known, and well defined. These bases were repeated more than once. The bases of the Oslo agreement speak of the implementation of Resolutions 242 and 338. There are agreements by which he should abide. We absolutely must not participate either in the game of redefinition of the bases of the peace process or in the game of renegotiating the agreements we reached. There are agreements, and the test is the implementation of these agreements. They should leave Hebron; they should complete redeployment in the West Bank; and they must release the detainees. There is also the issue of the safe passage and other matters. They should be put to the test on these issues. I believe they prefer to play with words. They prefer rhetoric and the question of definition and redefinition. We have bases that were acknowledged in documents. What is important is that they start implementation on the ground of the agreements and what we had discussed.

[Al-Barqawi] Dr. Hanan: Muhammad Basyuni, Egyptian ambassador to Israel, described the Mubarak-Netanyahu meeting as excellent and said the meeting paved the way and provided an atmosphere for the resumption of the peace process based on Netanyahu's emphasis that he is eager to continue the peace efforts and that he is committed to all agreements with the Palestinians. However, Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa said Netanyahu's statements are a step forward, but this is not enough.

['Ashrawi] It is clear that there is a contradiction in interpretations. These are mere viewpoints, and some people are always ready to exaggerate optimism and the positive side, and they look for any signs to justify their optimism. My personal opinion is that the Egyptian political position is clear and says that these statements are not enough. Expression of intentions is something, and implementation is something else. This is what has always been said. Netanyahu tries to give a new impression without providing content and without subjecting the Israeli implementation and practices to that standard of verbal commitment. We assess commitment according to implementation and practices on the ground. We, here in Palestine, suffer from the failure to implement the agreements and from the unilateral Israeli undermining of these essential issues, and violation of the agreements and the Palestinian rights and the final-status issues. All these are real signs that the process is not going well and that the verbal readiness and intentions do not mean implementation. We know that it is a Likud policy to waste time in negotiations and in interpretation and reinterpretation, as brother 'Abd-Rabbuh said. It also tries to procrastinate and play for time in order to impose facts on the ground so that these facts will become a reality that cannot be changed or canceled. This is what makes the situation serious because the world today has a skeptical view about Israel's intentions, and Netanyahu is now trying verbally to absorb this anger and skepticism, and to absorb the Arab anger and prevent the reaching of an Arab strategy to confront the designs of the new Israeli Government. Hence, we have to be alert and not be trapped by statements that try to give impression without a content.

[Al-Barqawi] Brother 'Abd-Rabbuh, wasting time in negotiations, procrastination, playing for time, and absorbing the Arab anger—I emphasize this last phrase mentioned by Dr. Hanan—do you believe that the mechanism of the peace process can be innovated again?

['Abd-Rabbuh] I think the Arab position is probably in its best condition for several years, perhaps since the time before the Gulf war. This position emphasized the bases and the terms for the continuation of any sort of normalization with Israel. This was clear in the statement issued by the meeting of the Damascus Declaration states, which supported the Arab summit's resolutions and the need to support the Palestinian and Arab rights and commitment to the bases of the political process and implementation of already-signed agreements. In light of such a strong Arab position, and in light of a Palestinian position that emphasizes the importance of commitment to the implementation of the agreement and the need for negotiations on the final status, especially concerning Jerusalem, settlements, and other issues—and in order to maintain a coherent international position; the positions of Europe and various international blocs—in light of all this, I think it is possible to resume the political process and to contain this silly game. I think that some of Netanyahu's advisers thought that.... [pauses] They advised him that this world does not deserve more than a number of ambiguous statements, smiles, and general talk about the peace process, its continuation, and adherence to it, and that the Arabs can be deceived and tricked, and then their strong position can be defused. This is an extreme naivete on their part, and it will be even more naive on the part of any Arab or other party if it believes that such words and ambiguous statements that have several meanings can move the political process forward.

[Al-Barqawi] Yes. Dr. Hanan, brother Yasir says the Arab situation is now at its best since the Gulf crisis. We may not differ on this, but you said: We hope all Arab states will take positions similar to the Egyptian position in order to put pressure on Netanyahu. Otherwise, they will be negligent.

['Ashrawi] No. There are various ways. During this short period of time, we do not expect to reach harmony and a unified viewpoint in the Arab World. The various steps are related to many historic issues.

In general, however, let us say there is a unified position on the substantive issues, and there is an Arab will that focuses on the Palestine question and on the real requirements of the peace process.

This position was expressed by emphasizing the right to self- determination, Jerusalem, and a Palestinian state, and that resolving the Palestine question is really the key to a lasting peace. This position also linked any attempt at achieving normalization and diplomatic, trade, and other relations with Israel to the extent of Israel's real commitment to the rights we all know.

In this regard, there is some confidence that the firm Arab position and the establishment of a common vision are in the interest of the Palestinian side, the Arab World, and the peace process. Netanyahu made steps and statements and took positions that provoked the Arab World, particularly when he said, with clear racism, that the Arab World needs democracy to meet the requirements for joining the peace process and to have the honor of holding negotiations with Israel. This is a provocative and racist position.

Netanyahu also said that the Arab World does not have options, so it is obliged to adapt itself to the Israeli proposals. As you know, the Arab position was not only a reaction to these racist and arrogant Israeli positions, but a strategy was also crystallized in the meetings held before and during the summit. There are now intensive meetings and contacts to work out constant mechanisms to implement the summit resolutions and emphasize them at various meetings following the summit.

I am confident that continuing the Arab interaction, this vision, and these contacts, as well as emphasizing the implementation mechanisms and supporting the Palestinian position, will protect the Palestine question and the negotiating process.

[Al-Barqawi] Brother Yasir, no official Palestinian source has made a statement regarding a meeting between President 'Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister David Levi.

['Abd-Rabbuh] This meeting might be held in the middle of next week. In any case, there has been no final decision about the meeting. Regardless of whether this meeting is held or not, we do not want to fall into the trap represented by the public relations game that the Israeli politicians try to play, which means turning the issue from serious negotiations on implementing the agreements into negotiations on how to meet and at what level and how to discuss the bases of the peace process—as if it is 1989 or 1988.

I believe that we should not exaggerate the issue of meetings, whether they will be held, and at what level they will be held. We do not need such meetings, but the Israelis need them. This is because, as brother Abu-'Ammar said, the peace process is not only a Palestinian need. It is also an Israeli need. The Israelis need these meetings and also need discussions with the Palestinian side on implementing the agreements....

[Al-Barqawi, interrupting] It seems that they are trying to make things hard for us.

['Abd-Rabbuh] If they are really doing so, then they are acting in a ridiculous manner. The issue is related to the destiny of peoples and an entire region. They want to set a price for each meeting and make the peace process stumble, so that what is required will not be to implement the agreements, but to only hold kind meetings with their excellencies.

[Al-Barqawi] Dr. Hanan, your report on higher education, which was submitted to the cabinet last night, deserves holding another conversation at a later time. Thank you, Dr. Hanan and Yasir. Good morning.

['Ashrawi] Good morning. You are welcome.

Palestinian Affairs: PLO Executive Committee, Cabinet Meet 19 Jul

JN2007071896 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0500 GMT 20 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The PLO Executive Committee and the Palestinian Council of Ministers held a joint session in Nabulus yesterday evening chaired by President Yasir 'Arafat.

Dr. Nabil Sha'th, planning and international cooperation minister, said that political issues were the main topics discussed by the Executive Committee and the Council of Ministers. Sha'th added that the participants discussed the results of President 'Arafat's recent visit to Cairo, the visit he began today, his meeting with President Husni Mubarak, and the results of the visits abroad by several ministers and officials, particularly Abu-Mazin's [Mahmud 'Abbas] visit to Jordan and his meeting with Jordanian Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti, the talks by [Public Works Minister] 'Azzam al-Ahmad in Baghdad, and [Communications Minister] 'Imad al-Faluji's talks in Tehran.

Commenting on Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's statements in Cairo, Sha'th said that Netanyahu's new approach will cancel out his previous statements if it is substantiated by practical steps toward peace.

Sha'th added that the Palestinian people and their leaders are waiting for the withdrawal from Hebron, the redeployment of the Israeli forces in the remaining parts of the West Bank, the lifting of the siege, the setting of a date for the resumption of the negotiations, the release of the detainees, the opening of the safe passage, and the implementation of all the agreements.

Palestinian Affairs: Comments on Joint PLO Committee, Cabinet Session

JN2007145696 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1115 GMT 20 Jul 96

[Report by Khalil Abu-'Arab in Nabulus; from the "Today's Events" program]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The PLO Executive Committee and the Council of Ministers of the National Authority held a joint session at the Nabulus Governorate headquarters last night. The participants in the meeting stressed adherence to the terms of reference and principles of the peace process, as well as the land-for-peace principle.

Nabil Abu-Rudaynah, President Yasir 'Arafat's adviser, said the participants in the joint session denounced the Israeli stands that seek to renege on the commitment to redeploy in the city of Hebron. Abu-Rudaynah said the participants urged the Israeli side to speed up redeployment in the city, resume the negotiations and implement what was agreed upon, including the release of prisoners, the crossings, the safe passage, and the siege imposed on our Palestinian people.

[Begin Abu-Rudaynah recording] President Yasir 'Arafat chaired the joint session of the PLO Executive Committee and the Council of Ministers of the Palestinian Authority in Nabulus tonight. The participants listened to a detailed explanation of political developments in the region, especially President Abu-'Ammar's [Yasir 'Arafat] visit to Cairo and his meeting with President Husni Mubarak. In addition, the participants were briefed on the international contacts made by President Abu-'Ammar with world leaders to protect the peace process after a series of contradictory stands declared by Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu. The joint session stressed adherence to the terms of reference and the principles of the peace process, as well as the land-for-peace principle, on which the Madrid conference was based, and to the agreements that were signed, when negotiations resume with the Israeli side. The joint session denounced the Israeli stands that seek to renege on it commitments to redeploy in the city of Hebron. The participants urged the Israeli side to expedite redeployment in Hebron and implement all the issues that were agreed upon, including the release of prisoners, the safe passages, the siege, the isolation of the city of Jerusalem, denying Muslims and Christians access to mosques and churches, and continuing to confiscate land and expand settlements, and other hot issues. [end recording]

The participants expressed their full support for the al-Jahhalin tribe in their stand against the attempts of the Israeli authorities to force them to evacuate their lands. The participants hailed the steadfastness of the people of the villages of Qaryut and Turmus 'Ayya in the face of the settlers who constantly attack the land of the Qaryut village. The joint session denounced the Israeli suppressive measures and the siege of the villages, deeming it a closed military zone. The participants said opposing settlement attempts is a national responsibility. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Leader Hamami Urges Opposition To Support 'Arafat

JN2207063196 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0500 GMT 22 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Shaykh Jamil Hamami, a leader of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] in the West Bank, called on the Palestinian opposition political forces to increase their support for President Yasir 'Arafat in order to pursue the peace process and establish the Palestinian Arab state with holy Jerusalem as its capital.

In an interview with a Greek television station, Shaykh Hamami did not rule out his participation, along with other Hamas leaders, in the National Authority and in any new government formed by President 'Arafat. He said the overwhelming majority of the Palestinian Arab people support the peace process.

Arab-Israeli Talks

Arab-Israeli Talks: Israel Said Proposing Secret Talks With Syria

JN1907184896 Amman SHIHAN in Arabic 20-26 Jul 96 p 13

[Report by Faysal al-Malkawi]

[FBIS Translated Text] As he was preparing to leave Tel Aviv for Washington, Binyamin Netanyahu declared that he had "a surprise for the world" up his sleeve with regard to the Middle East peace process. What kind of surprise was the hard-line Israeli prime minister talking about? It calls for a draft peace treaty with Syria to be signed before the U.S. presidential election, if Syria will agree to resume the secret negotiations with Israel that opened in mid-1995 in the Argentine capital Buenos Aires, with direct U.S. sponsorship, following the election victory of President Carlos Menem. President Menem, it was hoped, would invest in his special relationship with the Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, which, at one point, produced a meeting between former Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres and Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar'.

What is the story of these negotiations, which have remained secret and which, it was hoped, would produce an Israel-Syria Oslo. What are the specifics of the draft peace that was on the agenda for these negotiations? And why did these negotiations stop in their tracks? In this report, SHIHAN will seek to provide answers that have been leaked to it by special sources in Washington.

These sources have disclosed that the Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu made an offer to the U.S. Administration to revive the secret forum between Israel and Syria as an irreversible Israeli condition if Syria wants to join real talks that could culminate in its recovery of the Golan Heights and secure Israel against any future Syrian military threats.

Netanyahu, according to the sources, made clear to the U.S. Administration that this was the surprise he was talking about when he left for Washington. The Israeli prime minister was said by the sources to have handed the U.S. Administration a file detailing Tel Aviv's blueprint for peace with Syria and Lebanon. Essentially, this plan calls for decoupling the Lebanese and Syrian tracks and a quick Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon as a result of direct negotiations with Lebanon, away from Syrian intervention. In secret negotiations with the Syrians, Israel would from the outset accept the principle of withdrawal from the Golan in return for guarantees against Syrian threats.

In this blueprint, which does not differ substantially from the core of the previous Israeli-Syrian secret talks in the Argentine capital, Netanyahu points out that Israel would be committed to signing a peace treaty with Damascus in the remaining months before the American presidential elections if Syria agreed to the suggestion to resume secret talks. If this does not materialize, Israel will be committed to keeping the unofficial texts ready for signing after the elections are over, regardless of who wins.

The sources pointed out that Netanyahu proposed the Argentine capital as a venue for the new negotiations if Syria agrees to the idea and is willing to start from square one. According to the same sources, Dore Gold, the Israeli prime minister's political adviser, told Walid al-Mu'allim, the Syrian ambassador in Washington, that a Syrian-Israeli peace deal in the next few months was not to be ruled out if Syria is willing to engage the new Israeli Government in serious negotiations. He stressed that the peace he has in mind will take the kind of courage displayed by PLO leader Yasir 'Arafat when he entered into secret negotiations in Norway with the former Israeli Government. These talks climaxed with the signing of Oslo One, the so-called "declaration of principles," which paved the way for the establishment of a limited Palestinian entity in the "self-rule areas."

These statements, according to the sources, amount to an implicit invitation to the Syrian leadership to pick up the secret negotiations with the Likud government. Netanyahu, the sources add, has found no evidence to indicate that the former Labor government signed any secret documents with the Syrians or Palestinians. Gold however, did not deny there are secret contacts taking place among the parties. Netanyahu's statements were made as a number of questions were being raised by Israeli officials about secret contacts with the Syrians.

Back to details of the secret talks held in Buenos Aires. In statements to SHIHAN, sources report that the U.S. Administration succeeded in putting the special relationship between the Syrian and Argentine presidents to good use by asking the latter to convince Hafiz al-Asad to enter into secret negotiations with the Labor government led by Yitzhaq Rabin. The negotiations, the United States proposed, could be held in Buenos Aires and directly sponsored by Washington, the idea being that the Americans would act to smooth over any obstacles that could crop up down the line. In April 1995, the Argentine president, who originally hails from Syria, did succeed in swaying the Syrian president into entering secret negotiations with Israel.

The sources report that the talks got under way in June 1995 and that they took the format of two committees, one political and the other military. They laid the groundwork for a meeting in September of the same year between the Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' and then Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres. The idea behind the meeting was to draft the broad lines of an agenda for subsequent talks to be conducted under the key rubric of "full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan in exchange for firm Syrian guarantees for Israel's security."

Damascus was said by the sources to have frozen its secret contacts with Israel in response to the United States and Israel honoring a promise that they would involve the Russians in the early stages of these negotiations. This was a clear indication by the Syrians that they wanted a trusted and effective international power, in addition to the Untied States, to vouch for the outcome of its secret talks with the Israelis. The sources point out that a summit between President al-Asad and Yitzhaq Rabin was supposed to follow to put the finishing touches on the agreement, if Israel and the United States had gone along with Syria's demand for the participation of a third party to underwrite the agreement.

The Israeli blueprint for peace that was put forward at these negotiations and that Netanyahu took with him to Washington features the following points:

1. The secret Syrian-Israeli negotiations should produce a peace treaty between the two sides that would provide for diplomatic ties and the opening of embassies in the two countries capitals.

2. There should be a decoupling of the Syrian and Lebanese tracks. Israel would undertake to commit a rapid pullout from south Lebanon and engage in direct contacts with the Lebanese Government.

3. Israel should withdraw completely from the Golan Heights within six months of the signing of the treaty in return for guarantees for Israel's security along the following lines:

a. The Israeli forces should carry out a full withdrawal from the Golan Heights, but would retain several token Israeli radar stations on the edges of the heights adjacent to Israel's borders for a three-year period that would begin when the treaty is signed.

b. The Israeli settlements, housing 13,000 Israeli settlers, should be vacated within one year of the signing of the treaty.

c. The Golan Heights should remain free of a Syrian military presence, with the exception of several security posts of limited strength, equipment, and authority.

d. Ten-thousand American troops would deploy in the Syrian Heights, supported by an air base to monitor a demilitarized zone between the two countries for a 15-year period, beginning from the date of the treaty signing. A 1,000-strong UN contingent should also deploy along with the Americans. The aim of the deployment is to test Syrian intentions and its commitment to the treaty. Once the 15-year period has elapsed, sovereignty over the Golan Heights would revert to the Syrian military.

4. The two countries' militaries should commit themselves not to have a strong presence of troops or heavy equipment within a border strip 15 km on either side of the contact line, including overflights.

5. Israel should permit an international committee to inspect its nuclear installations, as stipulated explicitly in the treaty, which would also call for the scrapping of weapons of mass destruction.

6. Joint Syrian-Israeli committees are to be formed to monitor any program of weapons of mass destruction in the two countries, on condition that these committees also comprise members from third-party nations to be agreed upon after the treaty is signed.

7. Syria's name should be struck off the list of the nations that sponsor terrorism.

8. The Syrians should commit themselves in writing to ending the state of war with Israel as an explicit part of the treaty. Syria should also undertake not to attack Israel. If it does attack, the international community would be obliged to come to Israel's defense.

9. The 40,000-strong Syrian military forces stationed in Lebanon should be withdrawn.

10. Any Syrian weapons of mass destruction that may be proved to be in existence by international inspectors should be destroyed, as should long-range Syrian missiles capable of reaching deep inside Israel.

11. Syrian-based organizations opposed to the peace process should be ejected. Syria should halt support for these organizations' foreign-based branches, any other antipeace groups based outside Syria, or any organizations that may fit the description of "terrorism."

12. Syria should end its support for Hizballah and evict the organization from south Lebanon.

13. Syria should undertake to carry out full normalization with Israel in the political, economic, and cultural spheres.

14. The two sides should work to arrive at a fair distribution of common water sources and put this plan in writing in the treaty.

15. The two countries will work out a program to exchange prisoners and search for the missing on both sides.

16. Syria should undertake to introduce a host of democratic changes to ensure internal stability in the country so as to guarantee the continued commitment to the treaty and preclude reneging on the treaty in the event of a change in the Syrian leadership.

The sources indicate that the joint political and military committees that conducted the secret talks arrived at common denominators on most of the items of the agenda, noting that the Syrians showed a degree of flexibility. The sources attribute the stall in the talks to a disagreement on the mechanics, rather than the details. The Syrian leadership sensed that the Americans and Israelis would be setting a trap for them if they proceeded with the secret talks, without bringing in a another world power, like Russia, that would strengthen Syria's hand in the negotiations and hold the Israelis and Americans to the provisions of the treaty. The Syrians feared that, otherwise, there might come a point at which they would find themselves out on a limb in the international arena and unable to call on international assistance after having conducted secret talks with the Israelis, without consulting any other parties. The Syrians also feared they would end up cut off from their Arab environs, having been proponents of joint action on all tracks of the Arab-Israeli negotiations.

The U.S. Administration, the sources add, has welcomed Netanyahu's project for peace with Syria and has set about holding the pertinent contacts with the Syrian administration. The U.S. Administration is expected to send Dennis Ross, the overall Middle East peace coordinator, to Syria to present the new project as a springboard for relaunching the secret talks with the new Israeli Government.

Arab-Israeli Talks: Likud MK's, Palestinian Council Members Hold 'Successful' Meeting

TA2207053596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0400 GMT 22 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Likud Knesset members [MK's] met last night in Ramallah with four Palestinian Council members. Gid'on 'Ezra, Ze'ev Boim, and Yehuda Lancri attended the three-hour meeting which was held at a private home and was organized by an independent research institute in Jerusalem. The participants described the meeting as successful and said that there is a wide basis for agreement between the sides on the peace process. They agreed that both sides have to honor the agreements signed and must look for further areas of cooperation, including in the area of economics.

Algeria

Algeria: President Reaffirms Exclusion of FIS From National Dialogue

LD2007221696 Kuwait Radio Kuwait in Arabic 1800 GMT 20 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Algerian President Liamine Zeroual continued his consultations today with the last batch of Algerian political parties within the framework of the dialogue which aims at preparing for the national conference and fixing the date for the legislative elections.

The Algerian Press Agency said that, inclusive of today's meetings, President Zeroual would have received the representatives of 12 political parties. Noureddine Boukrouh, leader of the Party of Algerian Renewal, said President Zeroual reaffirmed to him the exclusion of the banned Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] from the national dialogue.

Algeria: New Armed Islamic Group Statement Declares 'Holy War'

NC2207105296 Paris AFP in English 1017 GMT 22 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Algiers, July 22 (AFP)—A new armed Islamic group formed after a split in one of the most radical Muslim movements fighting the Algiers government announced its creation and declared holy war in a statement sent to AFP Monday [22 July].

The group calling itself the Islamic Movement for Spreading the Faith and Holy War is led by Mustapha Kertali, a former "amir" of the radical Armed Islamic Group (GIA).

Kertali, a former hardline leader for the GIA in the Larba region, said his group included GIA dissidents and former members of the Armed Islamic Movement (MEI) and the Islamic Front for Armed Holy War (FIDA).

The MEI is headed by Said Makhloufi, a former army officer who joined the outlawed Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) before going underground. The FIDA is believed to be behind the murders of several Algerian intellectuals and politicians.

The new group rejected any form of negotiation with the Algiers regime and called on all "combatants" to rally to its banner "to consolidate forces and continue the holy war."

Armed Islamic extremists, including the GIA, have been fighting the military-backed Algiers authorities since the cancellation in January 1992 of legislative elections which the now-outlawed FIS was poised to win. Some 50,000 people are estimated to have died in the conflict.

The country has been hit by a new wave of bombings and assassinations since May.

Twelve people died and 14 were injured Saturday when a bus carrying employees of an Algerian state-owned vehicle company was attacked at Keddara, 50 kilometres (30 miles) southeast of Algiers.

Earlier Saturday, five people were killed and 30 injured when a bomb exploded in a cafe in Kolea, west of the capital.

The authenticity of the new group's statement has not yet been verified. The Algerian daily newspaper LIBERTE was also sent a copy.

But the announcement comes amid evidence of splits in the GIA leadership.

A week ago, a statement purporting to come from the GIA, said it had ousted Djamel Zitouni as its head in a leadership purge.

The statement said Zitouni, alias Abou Abderahmane Amine — who claimed responsibility for the murder of seven French trappist monks in May — belonged to a faction that had been "manipulated" by the security forces.

Official censorship on all matters relating to security makes it difficult to evaluate the true scale of recent violence, and newspapers, threatened with suspension, have generally not published reports on the killing of civilians.

[Paris LCI Television in French on 22 July at 1015 adds: "A new armed Islamist organization has announced its creation in Algeria. The Islamic Movement for Prediction and the Jihad [Mouvement Islamique pour la Prediction et le Jihad] is led by a former leader of the GIA. The new organization has called on all fighting sections to put themselves under its protection, in order to consolidate its force and continue the jihad."]

Algeria: Daily Views Expulsion of Djamal Zitouni From GIA

LD1907194196 Casablanca AL-ITTIHAD AL-ISHTIRAKI in Arabic 16 Jul 96 p 1

[Unattributed article: "The Expulsion of Djamal Zitouni From the Leadership of the Armed Islamic Group in Algeria — The Dismissal of Zitouni Isolated the Intransigent Members of the Group — Will the Dismissal

Lead to the Opening of Dialogue with the Algerian Authority?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Majlis Echoura, the consultative council of the Armed Islamic Group [GIA], announced the expulsion of Djamal Zitouni, alias Abderrahmane Amin, from the group's leadership. This group is considered the most radical among the Algerian Islamic movements.

The Majlis Echoura's communique was signed by Hassan Abou Oualid, commander of Region Six.

The communique announced that the GIA was from now on "innocent" of anything that might be committed by Djamal Zitouni, who "will be put on trial." The statement also said that Hassan Abou Oualid has assumed the temporary leadership of the group pending the meeting of all the commanders of the regions.

The communique also included the dismissal of Abou Rihane (Farid Achi) [name as published], chairman of the movement's Legislation Committee, and Antar (Zoubari) from the National Majlis Echoura.

The group's communique announced its disavowal of a number of groups, including "The Islamic Front for Armed Jihad," which specializes in assassinating thinkers and university [members of staff].

The Majlis Echoura said that it made these decisions [illegible] it had realized over recent months that the movement "had lived a phase of difficult liquidations ... [ellipsis as published], which allowed for distinguishing between the opportunists and the honest people inside the group."

It seems that conflicts inside the armed group started to appear after Zitouni and his followers (about 60 people) assassinated two politicians from the Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] in November 1995. These were Mohamed Said and Abdelkader Redjam.

The assassination of seven French priests at the end of May after they had been kidnapped also widened the gap between Djamal Zitouni and the "moderates" in the movement.

It is known that Djamal Zitouni succeeded the group's leader, Cherif Kaouasmia [name as published], who was assassinated by the Algerian security forces three years ago.

Zitouni is considered the mortal enemy of French intervention in Algerian internal affairs. He executed the operation of storming the housing complex in which the employees of the French consulate and educational institutions in Algeria lived. He was also the person who supervised and ordered the hijacking of the French Airbus from Houari Boumediene International Airport in the capital, Algiers. Moreover, the Islamists who carried out the bombing in Paris and Lyon also belonged to his organization (The Armed Islamic Group).

Concerning the background to the expulsion of Djamal Zitouni from the GIA leadership, a Moroccan expert in Algerian affairs said it could be attributed to internal reasons, as his relations with numerous members of the group were very bad, particularly with the emir of the western region. In addition, this expulsion could also be a first step toward opening a dialogue with the FIS' Army of Islamic Salvation.

This expert adds that the dismissal could be attributed to external factors, including, in particular, the armed group's relations with France, or it could be to formulate a new strategy for entering into a dialogue with the Algerian authority in order to find an exit from the crisis that Algeria is currently living.

Algeria: Bomb Explosion Kills 5 in Kolea Cafe

LD2007123996 Madrid RNE-1 Radio Network in Spanish 1100 GMT 20 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] This morning, the explosion of a device planted in a cafe in the town of Kolea in Algeria has killed five people and injured 30; five of them are seriously injured, according to the police. Emergency services are at the scene helping the victims. Two young people were murdered by a suspected fundamentalist armed group at a bus stop in Kolea on 13 July.

Algeria: 7 Killed, 38 Injured in Kolea Cafe Bombing

LD2107124496 Kuwait Radio Kuwait in Arabic 1200 GMT 21 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The death toll of the explosion which took place in a cafe in the center of Blida yesterday has risen to seven dead and 38 injured.

The Algerian newspaper LE MATIN said today that two unknown people killed two workers with cold steel at a gasoline station in Khemis El Khechna, 20 km southeast of Algiers. The newspaper said that the two unknown people escaped.

Algeria: Bomb Explodes Near Blida 21 Jul

LD2107142296 Paris Radio France International in French 1230 GMT 21 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Violence in Algeria: This morning two gasoline station attendants were murdered 20 km from Algiers. A bomb is also reported to have gone off near the town of Blida — we do not know how many casualties there are.

Furthermore, two people injured yesterday in the explosion of a bomb at a cafe [at Kolea, 30 km west of Algiers] have died, taking the number of people killed in this attack to seven.

Algeria: Bomb Attack in Bouira Kills 12

LD2107173396 Paris France-2 Teletext in French 1639 GMT 21 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A new bomb attack killed 12 people at Bouira, around 100-km from Algiers, on 21 July, but the toll has not yet been confirmed by official sources. The attack took place aboard a bus carrying employees at a government factory producing trucks. This is the fourth bloody attack in Algeria since 17 July.

No one has claimed responsibility for the attacks, but they come a few days after the announcement of a further split within the GIA [Armed Islamic Group].

Algeria: Bus Intercepted at Checkpoint; 12 Passengers Shot

LD2207081796 Paris France-Inter Radio Network in French 0700 GMT 22 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Algeria has been experiencing a resurgence of violence attributed to Islamists for a few days. On 21 July, 12 employees of an Algerian state company riding in a bus were murdered some 50 km southeast of Algiers. The bus was intercepted at a fake checkpoint. The 12 victims were chosen at random from the passengers before being shot and some of them were even decapitated. Over these last five days, three Islamist attacks have already claimed the lives of 24 people in Algeria.

Egypt

Egypt: Mubarak Receives 'Arafat, Delegation

NC2007104796 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1000 GMT 20 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Husni Mubarak received Palestinian president Yasir 'Arafat this morning. Also attending the meeting on the Egyptian side were Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa and Dr. Usamah al-Baz, Foreign Ministry first undersecretary and director of the President's Office For Political Affairs. Attending the meeting on the Palestinian side were Dr. Nabil Sha'th, minister of planning and international cooperation in the Palestinian Authority; Zuhdi al-Qidrah, Palestinian ambassador in Cairo; and Nabil Abu-Rudaynah, adviser to President Yasir 'Arafat.

Egypt: 'Arafat Says Mubarak-Netanyahu Talks Important to Peace

NC2007120496 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1140 GMT 20 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Alexandria, 20 Jul (MENA)—Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat expressed his thanks to President Husni Mubarak for the great interest he shows in Arab issues in general and the Palestinian issue in particular. In a statement prior to his departure from Alexandria following his meeting with President Mubarak, he said that with his good capabilities and benevolent efforts President Mubarak managed to bring the Arab nation together in Cairo recently. He said that President Mubarak convened the Arab summit that we had been denied since the Gulf crisis. He praised the efforts President Mubarak is making to advance the peace process on the Arab, Palestinian, Syrian, and Lebanese tracks. He noted that what took place between President Mubarak and the Israeli prime minister in Cairo recently is considered to be very important to the peace process. He said we have to wait and see how [the agreements] will be implemented.

Egypt: Al-Baz Comments on Mubarak-'Arafat Meeting

NC2007115096 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1108 GMT 20 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 20 Jul (MENA)—Dr. Usamah al-Baz, Foreign Ministry first undersecretary and director of the President's Office For Political Affairs, has stated that during his meeting with Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat today, President Mubarak completed the discussions he is holding on developments in the peace process, specifically on the Palestinian track. Both presidents reviewed the important points that President Mubarak and Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu discussed during the latter's recent visit to Cairo.

In his statement today, Dr. al-Baz added that President Mubarak heard the Palestinian viewpoint from Yasir 'Arafat. Al-Baz noted that during the meeting President Mubarak said: We are looking forward to the meeting that will take place between Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister David Levi later this week. Mubarak voiced his hope that the situation will move in the direction of the peace process, the agreements reached between the Palestinians and Israelis will be implemented, the final stage negotiations will start, and the situation in the occupied territory will be improved.

Egypt: Al-Baz Terms Netanyahu's Cairo Remarks 'Comforting'

NC1907201696 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1915 GMT 19 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 19 Jul (MENA)—Dr. Usamah al-Baz, first Foreign Ministry under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs, has stated that Israel will soon implement everything it committed itself to with regard to the Palestinian track and in the Cairo and Oslo agreements. He said there is nothing preventing the final settlement negotiations from moving forward. When progress is made in these negotiations, it would be possible to proceed along the Lebanese track.

In an interview to be published in the weekly newspaper AKHBAR AL-YAWM tomorrow, Saturday 20 July, Dr. al-Baz added: We can now say that we have more hope than we had before the Israeli prime minister came to Cairo, because the tone he spoke in and the style of language he used in his talks in Cairo made it clear that he adheres completely to the peace process and that he feels it is important to make progress on all the tracks. His statements in this regard were very comforting.

Answering a question on whether the Israeli prime minister mentioned something about the principle of land for peace, al-Baz said: President Mubarak spoke about this issue. Netanyahu affirmed to the president that he is committed to continuing negotiations within the framework of the conditions that were agreed on in the Madrid peace conference. We believe, as does the Syrian side, that the Madrid formula leads to land-for-peace. Even if we consider Resolution 242 in isolation from all other factors, we understand that land cannot be occupied by force. This, alone, means land-for-peace. In other words, terminating the state of war and starting a stage of peace should be based on the illegitimacy of occupying land by force. That is, land that is occupied by force must be evacuated.

Dr. al-Baz noted that the Israeli prime minister asserted that he will persist in efforts to reach agreement with all the Arab parties. He also affirmed the importance of taking quick action in the direction of peace and placing the formula of peace and security in the right perspective. Some rapprochement in our viewpoints has taken place, al-Baz added, particularly when Netanyahu confirmed that through peace we can establish security and stability in the region.

Dr. al-Baz said the Israeli prime minister affirmed that he respects the Arab people and leaders, and that he did not mean to criticize them when he spoke in Congress. However, he did say that he wants to confirm the importance of improving the lifestyle in the whole region, including Israel and Syria. He said that he will expand his horizons so that he listens to any Arab leader. With regard to President 'Arafat, he said he will open bridges with him at the appropriate time.

In conclusion, Dr. al-Baz added that one can safely say that the Israeli prime minister's opinions were constructive and positive and that he is committed to continuing the negotiations on all tracks.

Egypt: Commentary Says Netanyahu Visit Generates 'Cautious Optimism'

NC1907135496 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1140 GMT 19 Jul 96

[Commentary by Zayn al-Ja'fari: "Netanyahu's Visit to Cairo— What Next?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's visit to Egypt and his talks with President Husni Mubarak generated cautious optimism about the possibility of reviving the Middle East peace process. This optimism is attributed to the satisfaction shown by President Mubarak after two rounds of talks with Netanyahu. After the talks President Mubarak announced that the Israeli prime minister asserted to him Israel's intention to implement its commitments within the framework of principles established by the Madrid conference and Israel's agreements with the Arab side.

It is clear that Netanyahu's talks in Cairo were useful by any standard. President Mubarak explained every aspect of the Arab position on the peace process. This position principally relies on the Security Council resolutions, the principle of land for peace, and the Palestinian people's rights. All these, without exception, form the basis for negotiations between the Arabs and Israel to achieve peace, which is threatened by Israel's hardline position.

After listening to the statements made by President Mubarak and the Israeli prime minister at the outset of their joint news conference yesterday and their answers to correspondents' questions, we can say we sense a measure of guarded optimism. It has become necessary for the Israeli prime minister to prove practically that Israel intends to honor its commitments on the peace process. It has also become necessary for the Israeli prime minister to prove practically that there is no room for beating about the bush and procrastinating over implementing Security Council resolutions and the land-for-peace principle and that a new interpretation of this principle cannot be contemplated.

This is what President Mubarak emphasized yesterday when he said principles and resolutions are written and do not change. Netanyahu's announcement at the news conference should call for some optimism, albeit very cautious, because Netanyahu still insists on negotiating without what he called preconditions. Here we remark that the Security Council resolutions and the land-for-peace principle are not preconditions. Rather they are the framework accepted by all the parties, including Israel, to press ahead with the peace process.

It is clear that Israel's security is still the main issue in the thinking of its prime minister, who does not consider the requirements of other countries' security in the region. Perhaps this is the key issue representing a major obstacle to resuming the negotiating process. The Israeli prime minister must reconsider the issue of Israel's security and realize that true security cannot materialize without a comprehensive and lasting peace guaranteeing the security of all the region's nations.

We should not forget to mention that a comprehensive peace guaranteeing the requirements of every nation's security will not be achieved unless the regional circumstances are favorable for such a peace. President Husni Mubarak has been emphasizing the importance of exerting further efforts on every level to reactivate the peace process.

We welcome Netanyahu's announced assertions that Israel will stick to all its obligations and that Israel will work according to the Madrid framework and its agreements with the Arabs. But we say that the decisive criterion in all this is consistency between Netanyahu's words and deeds and whether he has truly decided to abandon his hardline ideas that serve nothing, but hinder the peace process, and to work effectively to resume the negotiations. This is especially true because he was briefed in detail on the Arab view that is based on right and legitimacy and that now enjoys growing international support.

Egypt: Paper Says Palestinians Have Political Rights in Jerusalem

*NC2207055696 Cairo MENA in Arabic
0506 GMT 22 Jul 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 22 Jul (MENA)—The newspaper AL-AHRAM notes that during his joint news conference with Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu President Husni Mubarak clearly and definitely demanded that Israel respect the Palestinian institutions in Arab Jerusalem pending negotiations on the city's permanent status.

In an editorial today the paper declares that acknowledgment of the principle of a united Jerusalem does not mean that the Palestinian people's legitimate political rights in the city should be abandoned, not to speak of the civic rights of Muslims and Christians in the city—whether they are Palestinian or not.

The paper points out that recognition of these rights falls within the natural course of things because the former Israeli Government was obliged under Egyptian, Palestinian, and international pressure to acknowledge the right of the inhabitants of East Jerusalem to vote in the elections for the Palestinian Authority's Palestinian Legislative Council. This, the paper says, proves acknowledgment of the Palestinians' political rights in Jerusalem.

Egypt: Official Sees Gradual Shift in Israel's Stance

*NC2107180096 Cairo MENA in English
1705 GMT 21 Jul 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, July 21 (MENA)—The Israeli stance on peace is gradually shifting from hardline electoral outbiddings to preparation for entering a serious negotiatory process, Ambassador Fathi al-Shadhili, assistant foreign minister for European affairs, said today.

Al-Shadhili said the stage is now set for relaunching negotiations on all tracks which, he added, is deemed an essential development in the Israeli stance. Al-Shadhili also cited an obvious change in the attitude of the Israeli leadership toward all elements of the peaceful settlement.

Al-Shadhili pointed out that a meeting will take place shortly between Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister David Levi and that Israeli Premier Binyamin Netanyahu had said he would meet with 'Arafat at the right time.

Al-Shadhili urged European countries to undertake an influential and effective role in the coming stage of the peace process and singled out Russia as a co-sponsor of the Middle East peace process.

Al-Shadhili said the European role could lead to a kind of required balance in view of the fact that Europe's vital interests are linked to realizing peace, security, and stability in the Middle East.

Egypt: Foreign Minister Musa Leaves for Syria

*NC2107084696 Cairo MENA in Arabic
0805 GMT 21 Jul 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 21 Jul (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa left Cairo for Latakia this morning. Musa will convey a message from President Husni Mubarak to Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad dealing with developments in the peace process.

In a pre-departure statement, the foreign minister said that he will brief the Syrian leadership on the outcome of the talks Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyhu held in Cairo on Thursday. He added that he will hold talks with Syrian officials concerning the current status of the peace process, recent developments, and the possible efforts in the future to advance the peace process and maintain the principles of this process.

To a question about the Israeli authorities' decision to allow Palestinians to enter Israel as of today, 'Amr Musa said that the Israeli prime minister said in Cairo that he will allow 10,000 Palestinians to work in Israel. He said this is a humanitarian and economic issue. However, dealing with the Palestinian Authority, which is a political issue, is also important and basic. Therefore, there must be an overall Israeli move toward the Palestinians regarding both issues.

The foreign minister added: We are waiting for the meeting between Israeli Foreign Minister David Levi and Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat as part of the political issue.

Egypt: Musa Returns From Syria, Carries Message From al-Asad

NC2107170596 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1640 GMT 21 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 21 Jul (MENA)—Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa returned to Cairo from Latakia this evening after a quick working visit to Syria during which he was received by President Hafiz al-Asad.

Upon his return, Musa said he carries a message from President al-Asad in reply to President Husni Mubarak's message, which he delivered to the Syrian president today. He added that he will submit a detailed report to President Mubarak on the talks he held with President al-Asad and Syrian officials.

Musa said he explained the situation in detail to President al-Asad. He also listened to President al-Asad's comments, which he will convey to President Mubarak, especially in view of the visit that President Mubarak will pay to Washington toward the end of this month.

Musa explained that it was agreed to resume coordination between Egypt and Syria after President Mubarak's visit to Washington, in light of French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette's visit to Damascus on 22 July and his visit to Cairo on 24 July, and also in light of the visit that U.S. peace coordinator Dennis Ross will pay to the Middle East. He added that the ongoing European-U.S. contacts will be the subject of Arab coordination after the contacts end. He explained that there will be an Egyptian-Syrian meeting after President Mubarak's visit to Washington. Musa also said that a Syrian-Palestinian summit meeting is expected very shortly.

Egypt: Mubarak Marks July Revolution Anniversary

NC2207095096 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 0710 GMT 22 Jul 96

[Speech by Egyptian President Husni Mubarak at the International Conference Center in Madinat al-Nasr, Cairo—live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. Brother citizens, our celebration of the anniversary of the glorious July Revolution today is a mark of our loyalty to a great event that changed the face of life in Egypt and the Arab world, effected profound change in the Middle East, and blazed a trail for numerous nations that had long suffered exploitation and oppression to exercise their right to a proud and dignified life.

The July Revolution was associated with tremendous events that were landmarks of human endeavor, making it one of the world's greatest revolutions, greatly influencing the events of the era.

The glorious July Revolution resisted colonialism and foreign domination, not in Egypt alone, but also in the Arab homeland, Africa, and the entire Third World. It shouldered the greatest burden in terminating every form of exploitation and foreign oppression, in smashing the cordon of foreign military axes, freeing the national will of medium-sized and small countries of every conceivable restriction, and upholding the right to self-determination for every nation. [passage omitted]

Brothers and Sisters, our celebration of the glorious July Revolution anniversary follows a great event the repercussions of which were heard throughout our Arab world from the Atlantic to the Gulf and beyond. Thanks be to God because he enabled our nation to unite its rank and restore its solidarity after long division and dispersal. Thank God that he again guided our nation along the path of goodness and peace. God, may he praised, made Arab hearts reconcile in Cairo, enabled the Arabs to regain their harmony and solidarity to agree on a united stand with which to confront the challenges of a new era, and helped them move with a united disposition toward a comprehensive and just peace that represents the only road toward security, stability, and economic growth.

It should be truthfully stated that I never doubted the Arabs would regain their solidarity on firm and sound foundations that put frank inter-Arab discussion before reconciliation, lay down new rules for collective Arab action, and enact new regulations for an accepted Arab conduct that can safeguard supreme pan-Arab interests and preserve the long-established and respected Arab values that can handle this era's requirements and endless challenges.

It is wrong to imagine that the effort to restore Arab solidarity was a mere reaction to recent regional changes. The call for restoring Arab solidarity preceded these changes by several years and its real motive was the Arab understanding of the immensity of current world changes as the 21st century approaches and of the ferocious challenges the Arab nation faces at this critical phase. If we accept that the Arabs have united goals and a united fate, then these changes and challenges need the greatest cohesion and unity and the highest level of coordination over policies and actions.

Every nation has the right to exercise solidarity, coordination, and integration—a natural outcome of having the same history and the same fate. Why then this anxiety and this fear of every effort that seeks to strengthen inter-Arab ties? Why do some parties not wish the Arabs to meet together to discuss issues pertaining to their life and future and organize their cooperation in a quest for better status? Other countries have done this despite the many contradictions among them, coordinating their efforts and enhancing their cooperation in an integrated process to protect their collective interests and enhance their power to deal with other international powers on a basis of equality, fairness, and justice.

The Arabs did not meet to encroach on others' rights, to call for the pursuit of a hostile policy that turns its back on peace or that obstructs it, to seek war, or to renew the conflict. Indeed they met to defend the peace process against tremendous dangers that can cause violence, reescalate, renew the conflict, and drive the region into a maelstrom of destruction and ruin instead of channeling its capabilities and resources toward reconstruction and prosperity.

We are fully confident that the Arabs, through their solidarity and unity, can rectify the peace process so that it can forge ahead toward achieving its objectives and again be based on the right terms of reference.

The past weeks witnessed intensive Egyptian efforts in support of a just peace process based on the land-for-peace principle, which is in line with an Egyptian policy that seeks stability throughout the Middle East. Hence, Egypt called for an Arab summit meeting. It was successful by any standard. The positive Arab forces declared that peace is a strategic Arab option and that regional security can only be achieved when everyone enjoys security in a balanced manner without exception or discrimination. This is the Egyptian political line, which is aimed at safeguarding the interests of all the Arab and non-Arab sides in the Middle East and at ensuring stability and safety for this region's nations.

As chairman of the Arab summit, I made efforts to save the peace process from the effect on it of developments in Israel. I received the new Israeli prime minister to speak with him with total frankness and clarity about the dangers inherent in the policy of retreating from the peace or the practices that enshrine the faits accomplis. I emphasized the need to put things back on the right track and provide the necessary conditions and appropriate climate to resume the dialogue and negotiations between the parties to the peace process within the framework agreed upon and according to the basis of the principles on which the peace process was founded, particularly the land-for-peace principle, and also on the basis of the commitments mentioned in the agreements concluded so far, especially between the Israeli and Palestinian sides.

Perhaps the most important result of the Israeli prime minister's visit to Egypt is that he understood the need to deal with the Arab side as a partner on an equal footing, the interests of which could be achieved inasmuch as Israel's interests could be achieved. He also understood the need to forge ahead without any retreat or delay and that the importance of security lies in that it should be provided to everyone. I also conveyed to him what the Arab summit decided—to the effect that the Arab hand extends to peace inasmuch as Israel extends its hand to them. I also told him that the Arabs are serious about continuing the march until the end, which is bound to achieve the historic reconciliation between the people of Israel and the Arab peoples, including the Palestinian people, who have the lawful right to determine their future on their land in Palestine and in holy Jerusalem, a city with a long history to which the Arabs, Muslims and Christians, have made undeniable contributions. This must be reflected in any final peace document.

Through this fundamental view that Egypt proposed and that enjoyed overwhelming Arab support, the Arab countries are taking firm, fearless, and unfaltering steps toward their legitimate aims based on justice and fairness, which eschew domination and hegemony, reject the policy of imposition and oppression, and give all the region's nations the chance to play their role, fulfill their destiny, and protect their interests in accordance with the accepted rules of international coexistence and the principles the world community agreed upon after years of bitter experiences.

Brothers and Sisters, the Cairo Arab summit has reinvigorated the Arab League and established a new beginning for collective Arab action that seeks to serve the good of all the Arabs. But the results will hinge on our ability to learn from experience. Reconciliation and solidarity will not work unless all the Arab parties sincerely and strictly commit themselves not to turn their homelands into a safehaven for terrorist groups or give them support, shelter, and weapons to gratify evil schemes that do not serve any Arab objective. Nor will reconciliation and solidarity work unless everyone categorically renounces the use of force, violence, and coercion in resolving inter-Arab disputes. Reconciliation and solidarity will not work unless Arab conduct adheres to strict guidelines that prohibit meddling in the affairs of others, consider any damage to the interests of any Arab party as a criminal action, reject the formation of axes, and enshrine the supreme Arab interest as the primary objective.

Reconciliation does not consist of glittering mottoes and empty slogans, but, rather, committed behavior and proper dealings with others in which the concerned parties avoid trickery and deception and make their actions compatible with their declarations and the facts they create compatible with their dreams.

We will therefore not be deceived by mere words and promises. We will base our judgment on concrete facts and firm action alone. The future of nations cannot hinge on adventurism and risk-taking. Rather it should be based on clear facts and solid foundations, which occur when the rights and obligations of each party are in perfect balance with the rights and promises of the others.

In the same way that these rules govern relations and dealings within the Arab family, they also apply equally to our relations with non-Arab neighboring parties. This means that we judge their attitude toward us according to their behavior and tangible actions, not through frequent sayings or remarks that may conceal different intentions of a contradictory or conflicting nature. But praise be to God, we can differentiate good from evil and sincerity from deception. In our assessment of things we only rely on objective and indisputable criteria as well as a rigorous compliance with the truth, no matter how painful or bitter it may be.

Brothers and Sisters, our efforts in the pan-Arab arena complement our efforts inside the homeland to improve living conditions in Egypt under a true democracy that is getting richer and broader. This is because peace and development are two parallel roads and peace is in the interest of Egypt as much as it is in the interest of all the peoples in the region. We look forward to [gaining] the fruits of the current era of national action in which development rates are accelerating to ensure a progressive increase in individual income, enable us to provide jobs for every Egyptian, and improve the standards of basic services, particularly in the fields of education, culture, technology, health and population, and catch up with the revolution in the field of information, which now constitutes the mainstay of progress anywhere. All these are tasks that are difficult to accomplish without a comprehensive peace that guarantees the region's stability, creates a suitable atmosphere for increasing investment, and ensures that every energy is devoted to construction and the creation of glory and progress.

Brothers and Sisters, today we are at a difficult crossroads but I am certain that peace will triumph regardless of the difficulties and obstacles. Peace is what provides security. Peace is what builds bridges of confidence. Peace is what repulses calls for extremism. Peace besieges violence and hatred. Our mission as Arabs is to stress the eagerness for a comprehensive and just peace and to defend it and drum up support for it from all the peaceloving peoples. It is not to seek a collision or walk the path of confrontation, but to consolidate our confrontation, preserve it with all our might, and try to strengthen it. This is because Arab solidarity is capable of rectifying the march. By so doing we will continue the struggle that was triggered in the dawn of 23 July 1952 and preserve the noble goals that motivated our heroic revolutionaries to stick their necks out for the sake of the people's dignity and the homeland's glory. By so doing we will also complete the march of construction and progress, which is the solid foundation of any external achievements, whether on the regional and pan-Arab levels or on the more general international level. I pray God the Almighty to guide us, strengthen the ties of cooperation among our peoples, establish a relationship of justice between us and our people, and provide us with the power to uphold amity, good, and peace. Verily he is the best advocate and supporter. May God guide us all. May peace and God's mercy be upon you.

Egypt: Mubarak Phones Chirac on Peace Issues

NC2107173096 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1655 GMT 21 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 21 Jul (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak held a telephone conversation with French President Jacques Chirac this afternoon. The conversation dealt with a number of issues related to the Middle East peace process and the contacts France is undertaking in this regard.

Egypt: Tension Said To Return to Egyptian-Sudanese Ties

NC1907123996 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic 14 Jul 96 p 9

[From "The Brothers Page:" "Tension Returns to Egyptian-Sudanese Relations"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Less than a month after the meeting between President Husni Mubarak and Lieutenant General 'Umar al-Bashir, Egyptian-Sudanese relations are tense again following the joint security committees' failure to reach a solution to address the presence of Egyptian terrorists on Sudanese territory and their links with the strategy and plans of the Sudanese regime and the international organization of the violent groups seeking to disrupt security and stability in more than one country, primarily Egypt.

Our sources note that the Egyptian security committee that arrived in Khartoum last week has reached a deadlock; a Sudanese security committee provided it with names of Egyptians leaving Sudan recently but did not answer its questions. The Sudanese party's answers merely noted that the Egyptian groups were hosted by Islamic individuals and organizations that have no connection with the government, making it difficult to obtain sufficient information on these individuals.

The Egyptian authorities in Cairo consider this scenario as a Sudanese maneuver to mark time and deceive, as Usamah al-Baz, director of the President's Office for Political Affairs, and Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif noted. The Egyptian Government press has resumed attacks on the Sudanese regime. For its part the Sudanese regime has, since al-Bashir's visit to Cairo, sought to play up this visit through an intensive media campaign claiming that Egyptian-Sudanese differences are over and promising an end to the regional and international isolation after the rest of the world, primarily Egypt, realized Sudan's credibility and strength. The Sudanese media claims caused bitterness and shock among Sudanese popular [opposition] circles, which view Egypt as one of the most important parties sympathizing with the Sudanese people's.

In an attempt to respond to the Sudanese plan, which aims to exploit the Egyptian-Sudanese meetings to serve the Sudanese regime's interests, keep things quiet, and give Egypt scant information on the details that concern it, particularly in the security field, Egypt has taken administrative and security measures. The Egyptian authorities detain numerous Sudanese travelers at Egyptian ports and airports and deport some of them immediately. Some of these Sudanese contact their relatives in the Sudanese opposition in Cairo to facilitate their entry into Egypt. But the Egyptian authorities are determined to continue these harsh measures to achieve various goals, primarily to send a message to the Sudanese regime and public that things have not changed and that the differences and bitterness caused by the Sudanese regime's sheltering of individuals involved in acts of violence and in the attempt on President Mubarak in Addis Ababa still exist.

Egypt: AL-'ARABI Claims Turkey Preparing 'Lightning' Attack on Syria

NC1807165596 Cairo AL-'ARABI in Arabic 15 Jul 96 p 1

[Report by Ahmad Hafiz Sa'du from Damascus]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] AL-'ARABI has obtained the text of a report, issued after an emergency meeting of the National Security Military Academy in Turkey, recommending that a lightning military strike be launched against Syria with Israeli help and a U.S. green light.

Copies of the report, which carries the notation "very secret," were sent to EU countries and perhaps also to Egypt. In this respect, some observers in Cairo believe that President Mubarak's hurried visit to Turkey on Thursday [11 March] aimed, among other things, to abort the Turkish plan.

According to the AL-'ARABI correspondent in Damascus, the Turkish National Security Council, which strongly opposed the Islam-backed Welfare Party coming to power, drew up a scenario for the lightning attack. In this scenario, the Turkish Army would penetrate 20 km into Syrian territory up to the Syrian town of al-Daww. This would be similar to operation "Steel" last year, when 35,000 Turkish troops entered Iraqi territory to hunt down fighters from the Workers Party of Kurdistan [PKK] led by Abdullah Ocalan. Ankara claims that Ocalan lives in Damascus and also in the Lebanese al-Biqa' Valley.

According to the secret report, coinciding with the Turkish forces' attack Israeli forces would carry military exercises in the Golan Heights, to divert Syria's attention and to ensure the success of the operation. U.S. support would come in the form of giving a green light to Ankara and not denouncing the attack. This was confirmed by U.S. State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns in a secret letter he sent to Ankara. [passage omitted]

Egypt: Editorial Stresses Egypt's Stance on Jerusalem

NC2107081196 Cairo MENA in Arabic
0510 GMT 21 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo, 21 Jul (MENA)—Cairo newspapers today emphasize that Egypt, under the leadership of President Husni Mubarak, has taken great steps to resume the peace process on all tracks, after it succeeded in countering the actions of Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu against the peace process. Netanyahu's provocations had nearly left the whole peace process out in the cold. [passage omitted]

In its editorial, AL-JUMHURIYAH emphasizes the importance of contacts undertaken by Egypt to resume the peace process on all tracks. The paper adds: These contacts assert the determination of all sides to reach peace, though the way is still thorny and long in view of the contradicting ideas and methods.

The paper maintains that Egypt is aware of the importance of Jerusalem as a holy city for the three religions and is committed to UN Security Council resolutions that reject the partition of the city. Hence, Egypt called for postponing the negotiations on its status, and for maintaining its current identity whether Israel declares it as its capital or establishes settlements in East Jerusalem.

Libya

Libya: Commentary Views Renewal of UN Security Council Measures

LD2007152696 Tripoli JANA in English
1419 GMT 20 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tripoli, al-Nasir [July] 20 (JANA) — The so-called Security Council renewed the unjust measures imposed on the Great Jamahiriyah.

The French ambassador to the United Nations and the President of the Security Council for this month declared that the council held a session of consultations in which it reviewed the measures and kept them as they are.

The Council did not issue a presidential statement as has been the custom to do so. Also the three western countries including America, England [as received], and France did not issue a trilateral statement on this issue. This shows the support which the Great Jamahiriyah enjoys inside the Security Council, especially amongst permanent members like China and Russia as well as from the Non-Aligned Movement members in the Council.

The renewal of the unjust measures came despite the civilised stance taken by the Great Jamahiriyah in dealing with the so-called Lockerbie which has met with wide Arab, African, and international support through the resolutions of support adopted by the Arab summit held in Cairo, the African summit in Cameroon, and before them the Non-Aligned Movement summit held in Colombia, and the Islamic Conference Organisation. These all reaffirm their solidarity with, and support for, the Great Jamahiriyah and demand the need to lift the measures and that, if the latter continued, they will no longer be bound to comply with them, and that they will use all possible means to avert the Great Jamahiriyah suffering any further losses. They declared their full support for the Great Jamahiriyah in its right to claim the appropriate compensation for the material, human, and financial losses suffered from the application of these measures. In this respect, they reasserted their support for the resolutions of the League of Arab States on the settlement of the so-called Lockerbie.

Also, the renewal of these unjust measures by the so-called Security Council comes despite the support for the Great Jamahiriyah from China and India in addition to the majority of international and regional popular and trade union organisations which, together, constitute more than three quarters of the world.

Libya: 'Volatility' of al-Qadhdhafi's Sons, Cracks in Regime Noted

MS2207092296 London THE SUNDAY TIMES in English 21 Jul 96 p 18

[Report by Marie Colvin: "Al-Qadhdhafi Sons Started Massacre"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Rivalry between two of Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhaffi's football-mad sons has emerged as the cause of a bloodbath in Tripoli two weeks ago, when 30 spectators at a football match were shot or crushed to death in an incident which suggests growing instability in one of the world's most tenacious dictatorships.

Until now, only the barest of details of the tragedy have emerged from secretive Libya, where al-Qadhdhaffi has been grappling with rising discontent and armed uprisings by Islamic extremists. The bizarre truth is that a fight between the bodyguards of al-Qadhdhaffi's sons triggered the carnage.

The whimsical, at times violent, antics of al-Qadhdhaffi's sons — reminiscent of the erratic behaviour of President Saddam Husayn's brutal offspring in Iraq — offer little hope for any relaxation in Libya's harsh regime if control is kept in the family: as they come of age, it is becoming clear that al-Qadhdhaffi's sons are cast in the mould of their ruthless and unpredictable father.

Libya has attempted to hush up the causes of the violence at the football match on July 9 between the al-Ahli team, controlled by Sa'adi, Qadhdhaffi's favourite but highly volatile youngest son and al-Ittihad, run by Muhammad, his eldest son and only child by his first wife.

When they swaggered into the stadium with their bodyguards in the manner of Roman emperors at a contest of gladiators, the crowd — already resentful at having been forced to wait in the sun for the arrival of the distinguished guests was in no mood for what followed.

According to Libyan sources, 22-year-old Sa'adi, known for his passion for fast cars and foreign women, interceded to persuade the referee to award a contentious goal to al-Ahli in order to clinch the match for his team. When the nervous referee complied, Muhammad was furious and a dispute erupted between the bodyguards of the brothers.

Enraged by the interference, fans began pouring onto the pitch in protest, chanting anti-al-Qadhdhaffi slogans.

Forgetting their earlier dispute, the bodyguards reacted by firing first into the air and then on the crowd. As spectators panicked — some trying to climb back into their seats and some to flee the stadium fans were shot or trampled to death. An estimated 30 supporters died and scores more were injured.

Forced, finally, to acknowledge that the incident had taken place, al-Qadhdhaffi last Sunday [14 July] disbanded the two football teams and canceled all matches during a 40-day period of mourning. Libyan television also acknowledged the tragedy by broadcasting only in black and white last week.

Such open displays of defiance by a crowd are virtually unheard of in Libya and will be a salutary lesson for the young al-Qadhdhaffi's as they prepare to follow in their father's footsteps.

Security forces have traditionally monitored Libyans so closely that even the slightest criticism of the regime or al-Qadhdhaffi has meant jail or even death. The recent violence is being seen as a sign of dangerous new cracks appearing in the iron structure of al-Qadhdhaffi's dictatorship.

Libyans have grown increasingly frustrated over sanctions imposed by the United Nations in an attempt to force the country to surrender two men accused of downing an American airliner over Lockerbie in 1988. The sanctions have put a stop to all air travel in and out of Libya and have caused increased economic hardship despite the country's wealth of oil and small population.

Coupled with the population's growing restiveness al-Qadhdhaffi also faces a sporadic guerrilla war led by Islamic militants centred in Benghazi and the eastern provinces. These disparate groups of armed militants have, over the past 10 months, raided army depots, assassinated security officials and attacked military installations.

Given the militants' apparent lack of co-ordination, the regime was shocked several months ago by the assassination in Benghazi of Lieutenant Colonel Miftah al-Biaou, head of the Mukasaha Zandaka or "anti-heresy force", a unit set up by al-Qadhdhaffi to fight the rowing Islamic threat.

In another display of open defiance several weeks ago, a group of imprisoned Islamic militants in the infamous BouSaleem jail outside Tripoli took prison guards hostage and managed to seize their weapons. The rebels held out for three days until soldiers stormed the prison, sparking a gun battle that left scores of prisoners and soldiers dead and wounded.

Other militants who escaped from prison last November have yet to be rounded up. Last month they attacked a military convoy in the Green Mountains, blowing up two vehicles and killing some of the soldiers before fleeing.

Although the Islamic militants are not yet strong enough to threaten al-Qadhdhaffi's grip on power, they are damaging the image that he and his security forces are untouchable. Such evidence of weakness could embolden the cowed Libyan population.

If al-Qadhdhaffi's sons are to succeed him, western observers believe there is little scope for optimism: "The sons are behaving like uncrowned princes," said Ashour al-Shanus, a Libyan publisher living in exile in London. "They act as if the country is their father' s backyard."

While none of the younger al-Qadhdhaffis seems yet to have reached the level of outrages committed by Saddam Husayn's psychotic son 'Udayy, who shot his uncle and beat a retainer to death, the shooting at the football match was the most public example so far that they can get away with anything.

Al-Qadhdhaffi's second son, Saef — the name means "sword" — already holds a position overseeing the armed forces and regularly represents his father on diplomatic missions. The 23-year-old is said to be playing a lucrative role in oil sales, the source of Libya' s wealth. He has also been implicated in a currency trading scandal in Egypt.

It is the behaviour of Sa'adi however, which is giving most cause for concern. He has a passion for sports cars and on frequent trips to Italy rents them for joyriders, and reports of how much he has spent on female escorts abroad has caused outrage at home.

Unconfirmed reports have it that he is resented in military circles after slapping a senior officer in the face, a humiliation in the Arab world. Abdullah Sanussi, his uncle, is said to have had to placate the family of a young woman allegedly raped by Sa'adi and his friends.

Sa'adi first came to international attention after the 1986 American bombing of targets in Tripoli and Benghazi, including the al-Qadhdhaffi family home in the Bab al-Azziziya barracks. On the first anniversary of the attack, the frail 12-year-old confronted visiting journalists in the ruins of his home, vowing revenge. "If defending our country is terrorism, we are all terrorists," said Sa'adi, shaking his tiny fist. Such public displays of emotion have apparently endeared him to his father and confirmed him as al-Qadhdhaffi's favourite child.

So blind is the Libyan leader to the odium in which his regime is held overseas that al-Qadhdhaffi extended an olive branch to America, his old enemy, last year by suggesting that Sa'adi should many Chelsea, the only daughter of President Bill Clinton. Such offers are a traditional tribal means of settling old disputes.

Needless to say, the Clintons did not respond to the offer.

Mauritania

Mauritania: Police Chiefs, Magistrates Arrested in Drug Affair

LD2107083096 Paris Radio France International in French 0730 GMT 16 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In the fight against drugs, there has been the first official acknowledgement in Mauritania of a large-scale drug trafficking affair which has ramifications extending right to the very heart of the administration, as seven police chiefs and four magistrates are in prison, including the former public prosecutor of Nouakchott. (Abdoulaye Ould Mohamed Mahmoud), deputy director general of state security, gave details of the matter on Mauritanian radio and television:

[Begin (Ould Mohamed Mahmoud) recording] The referral to the courts of 50 people is the result of a long and painstaking investigation which lasted over two years. This investigation made it possible to uncover and break up an extensive drug trafficking network. The scale of this network's schemes was all the greater because they were able to draw on members of the police and other state services for help.

Finally, I would specify that all of the people linked either directly or indirectly to this network have been handed over to the courts, and the products seized have been destroyed. [end recording]

Morocco

Morocco: Polisario Leader Reportedly Seeks Asylum in Spain

LD1907131796 Rabat MAP in English 1243 GMT 19 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Rabat, July 19 (MAP) — A "Polisario" [Popular Front for the Liberation of Saquia El Hamra and Rio de Oro] leader, Badadi Omar, has applied for political asylum in Spain, Moroccan AL-BAYAN daily Thursday [18 July] reported, quoting Sahrawi sources.

Badadi Omar had held many official positions within the "Polisario", an Algerian-backed guerrilla movement claiming independence of Western Sahara. He was among others the separatist movement's military attache in Cuba, police chief in Tindouf (south-western Algeria, where Polisario is headquartered) and Polisario assistant representative in Madrid, the daily said.

The Western Sahara is a former Spanish colony that was retrieved by Morocco in 1975 under the Madrid accords. The United Nations has been trying since 1991 to hold a self-determination referendum to determine whether the territory would set up on its own or join Morocco.

The whole referendum process is now at a standstill due to divergences between Morocco and the Polisario over the number of eligible voters in the consultation.

Bahrain

Bahrain: Prime Minister Leaves for Kuwait on Official Visit

JN2007083896 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0710 GMT 20 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Manama, 20 Jul (WAKH)—His Highness Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, prime minister of Bahrain, left Manama for the sisterly State of Kuwait this morning at the official invitation of His Highness Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah, Kuwaiti heir apparent and prime minister. [passage omitted]

The minister will meet with His Highness Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah, amir of the State of Kuwait, and will have talks with the Kuwaiti heir apparent and prime minister on their strong bilateral fraternal relations, regional and Arab developments, and issues that concern the Gulf Cooperation Council states.

After this visit, his highness will pay a similar visit to the sisterly United Arab Emirates in response to a fraternal invitation from His Highness Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Zayid Al Nuhayyan, heir apparent of Abu Dhabi and deputy commander in chief of the Armed Forces in the United Arab Emirates. [passage omitted]

Kuwait

Kuwait: Bahrain's Prime Minister Arrives, Gives Statement

LD2007114496 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 0758 GMT 20 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Kuwait, 20 Jul — Bahrain's Prime Minister Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Salman Al Khalifah arrived here today on an official visit at the invitation of Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah, Kuwait's heir apparent and prime minister.

In a statement he gave upon arrival, Bahrain's prime minister stressed that this visit was a continuation and follow-up of the issues of interest to both countries and the region's states and that concern their security and stability, which were discussed during the Kuwaiti prime minister's recent visit to Bahrain.

He described the meetings of the Gulf Cooperation Council leadership as natural and necessary for the continuation of consultations, exchange of viewpoints, and coordination of stances within the one family so as to realize hopes and ambitions and stand together in the face of the impending dangers and challenges that threaten its existence and destiny. [passage omitted]

Bahrain's prime minister will meet Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Sabah, amir of the State of Kuwait, at noon today. Official talks will begin this evening. Shaykh Khalifah will chair the Bahraini side whereas prime minister Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah will chair the Kuwaiti side. [passage omitted]

At the end of his visit to Kuwait, Shaykh Khalifah will go to the United Arab Emirates.

Kuwait: Kuwaiti-Bahraini Talks Begin

LD2007175096 Kuwait Radio Kuwait in Arabic 1700 GMT 20 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] His Highness Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Salim, the heir apparent and prime minister, received at Bayan Palace this evening His Highness Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, the prime minister of the fraternal State of Bahrain, and the delegation accompanying him.

The joint talks between the two fraternal countries were held under the chairmanship of His Highness Shaykh Sa'd al-Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah and his brother, His Highness Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Salman Al Khalifah. [passage omitted]

The talks concentrated on ways and means for strengthening the firm fraternal relations between the two countries and the two fraternal peoples and developing their bilateral cooperation in various spheres within the framework of the Gulf Cooperation Council, in addition to other issues of common concern.

Kuwait: Council of Ministers Renews Support for Bahrain

LD2107164096 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1505 GMT 21 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Kuwait, 21 Jul (KUNA) — The Council of Ministers has today renewed Kuwait's solidarity with Bahrain regarding strengthening its security and safeguarding its sovereignty and consolidating [words indistinct] in the Gulf.

That came in the council's weekly meeting which reviewed the results of the visit that the Bahraini Prime Minister Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Salman Al Khalifah concluded today.

Planning Minister 'Abd al-'Aziz Dakhil 'Abdallah al-Dakhil said that the heir apparent and Prime Minister Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdullah al-Salim al-Sabah had briefed the council on the results of the visit during which Kuwait's supportive stance for solidarity with the State of Bahrain was reiterated and all efforts were made to achieve the desired cooperation between the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

He added that Shaykh Sa'd also briefed the council about his talks with Shaykh Khalifah, which also concentrated on means of strengthening relations between the two countries, in addition to reviewing the recent developments in the Gulf region. [passage omitted]

Kuwait: Defense Minister on Rebuilding Army, Shield Force Troops

LD2207091096 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic
0722 GMT 22 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Kuwait, 22 Jul — In a press interview published today Defense Minister Shaykh Ahmad al-Hamud said that 70 percent of the Kuwaiti Armed Forces, which were completely wiped out during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990, had been rebuilt.

In an interview with AL-ANBA' newspaper Shaykh al-Hamud denied any Kuwaiti provocations of the Iraqi troops at the border. He said that "the Kuwaiti military forces are more than 5 km from the border." "There are no Kuwaiti troops in the demilitarized zone."

The defense minister lauded the role of the international peacekeeping force at the Kuwaiti-Iraqi border, UNIKOM, pointing out that "its role is effective. It helps limit the Iraqi trespassings which have become less than they were immediately after the liberation."

With regard to the French boat deal Shaykh al-Hamud explained that "the Ministry of Defense bought them because it saw them as being suitable for Kuwait's varying depth marine nature."

He added that decisions of the arms deals Kuwait signs with the states [passage indistinct]

With regard to the Peninsula Shield Force, which includes troops from the states of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC], Shaykh al-Hamud said that "this force will intensify its number of human force and military equipment to defend any GCC state being attacked."

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia: Islamic Movement Threatens Further Strikes Against U.S. Forces

JN1907141896 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic
1400 GMT 19 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] An organization calling itself the Islamic Change Movement-al-Jihad Wing in the Arabian Peninsula, [harakat al-taghyir al-islamiyah-janah al-jihad fi al-jazirah al-'arabiyah] has threatened Saudi Arabia that it will strike at U.S. forces in a way that will surprise them in terms of size, place, and time. The organization reiterated its call for these forces to leave the Kingdom immediately.

Saudi Arabia: Saudi Militant Group Claims 25 Jun Truck Bombing

NC1907172996 Paris AFP in English
1649 GMT 19 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Beirut, July 19 (AFP) — A Saudi militant group has claimed responsibility for the truck bombing in June that killed 19 American servicemen at an air base in eastern Saudi Arabia and threatened further attacks.

In a statement published Friday [19 July] in the AL-SAFIR newspaper in Beirut on Friday, "the Movement for Islamic Change, a branch of the Jihad in the Arab penninsula," said it mounted the attack, which also wounded 500 other people. "The movement has proven that it has long arms in attacking the complex of aviators in al-Khubar," said the statement, dated July 16.

"According to our information, the explosion caused 300 deaths and 600 injuries," said the group, adding that the attack was directed against "Americans" deployed in Saudi Arabia. The movement also threatened new attacks unless all US troops left Saudi Arabia.

Reports in the United States linked the explosion and crash of a TWA 747 off New York late Wednesday to threats made by the Movement for Islamic Change published in an Arab newspaper. But US officials played down the reports, saying the warning in Arabic may have been misinterpreted.

The movement said in its statement published on Friday that the United States failed to head warnings from an attack in November against a US facility in Riyadh that killed five American servicemen. "Instead of drawing conclusions from the attack against their headquarters in Riyadh last November, the Americans sent their defense secretary, William Perry, who threatened to attack the Mujahidin (Islamic fighters)," the statement added. "The Mujahidin reacted strongly at these threats ... and surprised the entire world by the strength of their reaction when and where they wanted," the movement said.

Some 24 US troops have been killed in two attacks in Saudi Arabia, the al-Khubar bombing on June 25 which left 19 dead and a bombing at US training offices in Riyadh in November which killed US soldiers. US troops have been deployed in the oil-rich kingdom since the Gulf War to drive Iraqi troops from Kuwait after Baghdad's August 1990 invasion.

Perry warned on Wednesday of possible future attacks and said measures were being taken to better protect US soldiers in Saudi Arabia, including transferring them to secluded bases.

Saudi Arabia: Crown Prince, Iranian Ambassador Discuss Bilateral Ties

*LD2107145796 Tehran IRNA in English
1833 GMT 20 Jul 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, July 20, IRNA — Iran's ambassador to Riyadh Mohammad 'Ali Hadi-Najafabadi in Riyadh Saturday [20 July] met with the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd al-'Aziz al-Sa'ud. In their meeting the two officials reviewed topics for further expanding Iran-Saudi relations, and agreed on the imperative for closer relations.

Saudi Arabia: Paper Hopes U.S. Will Reconsider 'Bias' Toward Israel

*JN2107060096 Riyadh AL-JAZIRAH in Arabic
14 Jul 96 p 3*

[Editorial: "What We Hope From the U.S. Decisionmakers"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The most serious political and security development in the Middle East peace process after the victory of the extremist Zionist Israeli Likud Party is the revival of the old U.S. bias toward Israel and adoption of Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's policies aiming to undermine the bases and principles according to which the peace process was launched.

The revival of the political and security bias toward Israel is a fact. This is not an allegation stemming from propaganda or mere speculation. Rather, this has been confirmed by the U.S. President, his secretary of state, and most recently by the U.S. delegation that took part in a seminar hosted by the Arab League headquarters in Cairo that ended on 12 July.

The U.S. bias toward the Israeli political and security vision was "the surprise of the dialogue" at the seminar.

The U.S. delegation voiced support for the claim of Netanyahu and the Israeli leaders who preceded him that "Jerusalem will not be redivided, and it will remain under Israeli sovereignty as Israel's eternal and united capital."

Earlier, President Clinton, his secretary of state, and then the U.S. Congress—both the Republican and Democratic wings—voiced support for Netanyahu's policies on the peace process. These policies are based on the resumption of the peace process on the basis of security in return for peace, rather than land in return for peace.

The revived U.S. bias toward Israel contradicts the following facts:

1. The United States is the basic and primary cosponsor of the Middle East peace process in view of the efforts it made to start the Arab-Israeli negotiations on a just, comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

2. The fact that the United States is currently the only superpower in the world gives it a special responsibility toward the principles of right and justice and world peace and security. This responsibility includes the elimination of injustice, particularly regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict, which basically resulted from Israel's disavowal of the Palestinian legitimate historic and legal rights, the Israeli forces' occupation of the Syrian territories in the Golan and the Lebanese territories in southern Lebanon, and its refusal to withdraw from the Palestinian West Bank city of Hebron.

The United States realizes that the historic injustice against the Palestinians bred their revolution, which consequently bred the intifadah, which has not abated since the peace process was launched at the Madrid conference.

If some extremists turned the Palestinian intifadah into "terrorist operations" inside Israel, there is a major concern now that the new U.S. bias toward Israel will breed a new terrorist extremism that will affect the entire Middle East and bring it back to the whirlpool of violence, and only God knows how far it may go. This is in light of the fact that Syria has officially warned that the United States' approval of Netanyahu's policies will lead to a very serious situation in the region.

The United States is a friend of most of the Arab states, and it has vital and strategic interests that go far beyond the interests it might achieve from its bias toward Israel. Based on this, we hope the U.S. political and security decisionmakers will reconsider their administration's current stand toward the Middle East situation, taking into consideration that the Arabs, all Arabs, will not accept peace with Israel at any price.

United Arab Emirates

UAE: Bahraini Premier Arrives on Official Visit

*JN2107094696 Manama WAKH in Arabic
0855 GMT 21 Jul 96*

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Abu Dhabi, 21 Jul (WAKH) — His Highness Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, Bahraini prime minister, arrived in Abu Dhabi this morning on an official visit to the sisterly United Arab Emirates [UAE]. He was invited by His Highness Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Zayid Al Nuhayyan, heir apparent of Abu Dhabi and deputy supreme commander of the UAE Armed Forces. His Highness will hold official talks on bilateral relations, regional and Arab developments, and issues of concern to the Gulf Cooperation Council's member states. [passage omitted]

UAE: Official Talks Held With Bahraini Prime Minister

JN2107175296 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1400 GMT 21 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Abu Dhabi, 21 Jul (WAKH)—A session of official talks was held in Abu Dhabi today between the Bahraini side, led by Prime Minister His Highness Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, and the United Arab Emirates [UAE] side led by Abu Dhabi Heir Apparent Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Zayid Al Nuhayyan. [passage omitted]

WAKH learned that the two sides discussed the means of promoting bilateral cooperation in all fields. The two countries stressed their full desire to further promote fraternal relations and cooperation between them. They also discussed current developments in the region, issues of interest to the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] member states, the latest developments in the Arab and international arenas, and a number of issues of joint interest. [passage omitted]

Iraq: Iraq Warns U.S. Troops Remain Target in Saudi Arabia

NC1907125696 Paris AFP in English 1136 GMT 19 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, July 19 (AFP) — Iraq warned Friday [19 July] that US troops stationed in Saudi Arabia would be the target of future attacks such as the bombing of a US housing complex in which 19 servicemen were killed.

"It is clear to everyone that the Saudi opposition which rejects the US occupation in Nadj and Hijaz is so well organised that it can strike its goals where ever they may be on Saudi soil," the Iraqi daily AL-THAWRAH wrote.

In an editorial headlined "The protection forces need protection themselves" the paper, which is the mouthpiece of the ruling Ba'th party, slammed the presence of US troops in the Gulf state.

"The time has come for the American forces, deployed in Saudi Arabi to protect the Al-Saud (reigning family) and the oil wells to find shelter to defend themselves from the Saudis opposed to their presence," AL-THAWRAH said.

On Wednesday President Saddam Husayn said that allowing US troops to be stationed in the Gulf would bring down a "curse from God."

Some 24 US troops have been killed in two attacks in Saudi Arabia, the al-Khubar bombing on June 25 which left 19 dead and a bombing on US training offices in Riyadh in November in which five US soldiers perished.

US troops have been deployed in the oil-rich kingdom since the Gulf War to drive Iraqi troops from Kuwait after Baghdad's August 1990 invasion.

Iraq: Ramadan Terms U.S. 'Hampering' of Agreement 'Fresh Scandal'

JN2107155296 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1325 GMT 21 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 21 Jul (INA)—Vice President Taha Yasin Ramadan said that the United States is the only Security Council member working to impede the implementation of the memorandum of understanding signed between Iraq and the United Nations.

In a statement to INA, Ramadan added that the U.S. Administration openly worked to impede the implementation of the memorandum of understanding signed on the exchange of oil for food, medicine, and other basic necessities for the Iraqi people. It deliberately obstructed the endorsement of the final measures enshrined in the plan triggered by the memorandum of understanding to prevent the implementation of this memorandum.

Ramadan went on to say that the steps and measures to implement this memorandum would have been settled a month ago had it not been for the U.S. position, which is clear to all states, including those that have close relations with the United States.

In this regard, Taha Yasin Ramadan noted the U.S. Administration's obstruction of the issuance of the standing operating procedures pertaining to the implementation of the memorandum of understanding, which were finalized by the Sanctions Committee headed by the German ambassador to the United Nations two weeks ago. He added that 14 members of the committee except the United States approved the draft of the procedures. The United States failed to support the draft because it was not a basic party to the plan.

Ramadan underlined the importance of cooperation, reasonable and sincere dialogue, and mutual trust between Iraq and the United Nations in reaching agreement on the implementation of the memorandum of understanding. He added that when these elements prevailed, the two sides managed to agree on the standing operating procedures, which constitute the biggest and most elaborate part of the memorandum.

The vice president said that the U.S. position, which is hampering the endorsement of the procedures, is a fresh scandal that is baring the malicious U.S. intentions. We have borne the brunt of the additional delay in the implementation of the memorandum of understanding, Ramadan maintained. This U.S. position has bared the hostile U.S. policies even to the countries closest to Washington, which previously cooperated with the U.S. plan against Iraq, Ramadan said.

Taha Yasin Ramadan criticized the parties that are dealing with Iraq and its political and economic future employing a short-sighted perspective and inaccurate and unrealistic calculations. He added that those whose views regarding Iraq are based on the current regional, Arab, and international state of affairs will not reach appropriate and sound conclusions about the future course of events, because Iraq enjoys great resources and capabilities, pursues a special course of action, and basks in great support for and rallying around a policy that is better than all other policies. These elements should be used as a guide to gauge Iraq's political and economic future on the regional, Arab, and international scenes. A traditional method of evaluation and calculation based on the current state of affairs would not help in this regard, Ramadan argued.

Ramadan went on to say: The Arab masses and all politicians and patriots who are not conspiring against Iraq in the Arab homeland and elsewhere in the world do not believe that Iraq's nonparticipation in the Cairo summit curtailed Iraq's role, as the advocates of traditional calculations believe. He added that the fact that Iraq did not attend the meeting confirms its principled course under President Saddam Husayn.

The vice president reiterated his trust that Iraq's stand on the Cairo meeting and its results, despite the ordeal it is suffering as a result of the aggression and the embargo, thwarted the attempts to shuffle cards and misrepresent some slogans purportedly upheld by some Arab rulers, especially since they recognized Zionism at the Cairo meeting and expressed their willingness to endorse any solution that would warrant their capitulation.

Taha Yasin Ramadan made a comparison between the fervent efforts of some of the Cairo summit participants to appease some world parties and Iraq's firm and principled stand, even though it is viewed as the party that most needs to appease the international community. He added: By all standards and under the circumstances, our position is stronger than that of these parties. We have demonstrated our firmness and adherence to our principled stand, even though many parties contend that it was Iraq's principled stand which prompted the aggression, the plotting, and the embargo.

Ramadan expressed his trust that the heightened U.S.-Zionist plotting against Iraq while other countries are spared such plotting shows the honesty and credibility of the Iraqi policy. He added: This requires us to demonstrate greater readiness to make sacrifices and adhere to this march, especially since Iraq has become the only ray of hope for all strugglers in the Arab arena.

The vice president expressed optimism about future prospects, saying that this optimism has been ushered in by the cracks made in the wall of the embargo and the implementation of extraordinary measures in all areas.

Iraq: Butrus-Ghali, Al-Anbari on Food, Medicines Plan, Oil Sales

MM1907123996 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic
19 Jul 96 pp 1, 6

[Report by Raghidah Dirgham: "United Nations Agrees to Iraq's Plan for Distribution of Food and Medicines"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] New York — UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus-Ghali has handed to the Iraqi chief delegate for the negotiations on the implementation of Resolution 986, the UN Secretariat General's approval of his plan for the distribution of food, medicine, and sanitary supplies purchased using oil revenues, limited by Resolution 986 to $1 billion every 90 days.

The secretary general described the approval of the plan submitted to him by the Iraqi Government as "a step among various steps" toward the implementation of Resolution 986.

He expressed his hope that the resolution would be implemented "as soon as possible."

For his part, Ambassador ['Abd-al-Amir] al-Anbari expressed his "hope that Iraq will begin to export its oil at the beginning of August."

The secretary general and the Iraqi ambassador pointed out that the next step is in the hands of the boycott commission, known as the 661 commission, which is awaiting U.S. and Russian replies to the measures concerning the ratification of oil contracts. Butrus-Ghali said that this commission is comprised of "UN member states which have to decide" on their position on the measures.

Al-Anbari agreed, saying that "matters are in the hands of numerous" governments of Security Council member states.

Al-Anbari said he was confident that the commission would approve the measures within the next two days or at the beginning of next week. He said: "I have every reason to believe that the commission will approve the measures soon." [passage omitted]

Iraq: AL-THAWRAH Says 'Mask' Fell Off BBC's Face

JN2107094596 Baghdad INA in Arabic
0650 GMT 21 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 21 Jul (INA)—An Iraqi newspaper said the mask has fallen off the face of the most prominent media deception establishment: the British Broadcasting Corporation, which played a major role in propagating colonialist policies and aggression against peoples.

In an article published today, the newspaper AL-THAWRAH, organ of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, said that British officials used to brag about the independence of the BBC, but Jeremy Hanley, British minister of state for foreign affairs, admitted that the BBC is part of the diplomatic efforts of successive British Governments when he tried to contain the clamor against the program changes introduced by the BBC director.

The newspaper adds: That multi-language radio station represents deceptive Western media, which distort facts and support the designs of the British and non-British intelligence circles, which were not identified by the British minister for domestic considerations. These circles are known through the file of the radio itself, which have always stood against the peoples' right to self-determination and establishing independent states, and which cast doubt about peoples' ability to protect their independence without assistance from foreign Western forces.

AL-THAWRAH said the BBC's file is full of hostility toward the Arab struggle movement and all the changes in Arab countries where revolutions were launched to realize independence and freedom from the domination of colonialist forces and liberation of national resources.

The newspaper concludes: No wonder the British minister admitted, under pressure of the circumstances, that the radio station is affiliated with the British Government. Although it was an important official confession, it did not reveal anything new for the peoples harmed by the malicious action and deliberate bad intention of that infamous radio which has been, and continues to be, a voice that preaches evil and is hostile to the freedom of peoples.

Iraq: Turkey Reportedly Hosts Iraqi-Israeli-Turkish Meeting

JN2107143296 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1215 GMT 21 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Representatives of the Zionist entity, the Saddam regime, and the Turkish Government held a secret meeting at the Turkish Ministry of Defense last week. (Fikret Pashkaya), head of the Turkish Middle East Research Institution, said that the secret meeting was attended by representatives of the Tel Aviv government; General (Jopec Ped), Turkish assistant army chief of staff; and civilian representatives of the Baghdad government.

(Pashkaya) added that the representative of the Saddam regime was told at the meeting that if Baghdad cooperates with Ankara to confront Turkish opposition factions and joins the Turkish-Zionist alliance, other parties will grant the Saddam regime the resources and privileges that would enable it to perform its role within the framework of this alliance. This meeting is the second of its kind after the meeting that brought together the aforementioned three sides as well as the United States in Turkey last year.

As part of these efforts, Israeli Knesset member 'Abd al-Wahhab Darawshah is expected to arrive in Baghdad soon, as reported by AFP on Sunday morning.

Iraq: Saddam Husayn Chairs Ba'th Party Iraq Command Meeting

JN2007142996 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1420 GMT 20 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 20 Jul (INA) — President Saddam Husayn, secretary of the Iraq Command of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, chaired a meeting of the Iraq Command of the party. The meeting was attended by Ahmad Husayn Khudayyir, chief of the Presidential Office.

Iraq: Saddam Chairs Cabinet; Standards, Specifications Discussed

JN2107121496 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1040 GMT 21 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 21 Jul (INA)— President Saddam Husayn presided over the 27th cabinet session.

His excellency stressed that what is required is to maintain the quality and quantity of the state's industrial production according to well-known standards and serious follow-up procedures.

He indicated the importance of supporting private activity within the framework of industrial integration in a manner that serves society and bolsters our people's steadfastness in against the unfair embargo, and in order to continue Iraq's march of progress.

This was said at the cabinet discussions about industrial integration between the socialist and private sectors.

The president emphasized the importance of maintaining the required specifications and the need for research centers to improve these specifications, in addition to the importance of improving skills to upgrade the industry in quality and quantity.

Referring to Iraq's history, which is thousands of years old, the president emphasized the importance of preserving antiquities because they are a basic part of the history of our great people. His excellency emphasized the need to enlighten citizens and the coming generations on this national wealth in view of its historical depth of the Iraqi civilization and what it stands for within the Arab civilization and its impact on humanity.

The cabinet discussed agenda topics and adopted appropriate decisions and recommendations concerning them

Israel: Levi-'Arafat Meeting 'Apparently' Set for 23 Jul

TA2107155496 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1500 GMT 21 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] For the time being, officials in Jerusalem will not officially confirm the date and venue of the scheduled meeting between Foreign Minister David Levi and Palestinian Authority [PA] Chairman Yasir 'Arafat because of Israel's sharp displeasure over the abduction of 'Abd-al-Salam Hirbawi by the Palestinian Police. This was reported by our political correspondent Shlomo Raz. Nevertheless, the meeting will apparently take place on 23 July at the Erez checkpoint. Today, Foreign Minister Levi held lengthy consultations prior to the meeting.

A senior Palestinian security source said the Palestinian authorities are awaiting final orders from 'Arafat to release Hirbawi from the Preventive Security Service's installations in Ramallah. The source told our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem that the abducted man had accepted Palestinian arbitration in the affair and agreed to withdraw his petition to an Israeli court for an injunction order against construction works by the Coptic Church.

Israel: Israeli Message to 'Arafat Threatens To Cancel Levi Meeting

TA2107175496 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 21 Jul 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The abduction of an Israeli Arab, 'Abd-al-Salam Hirbawi, is a new cause of tension between Israel and the Palestinian Authority [PA]. This evening, Yasir 'Arafat was sent a message stating that if the East Jerusalem merchant is not released, the meeting between the PA chairman and Foreign Minister David Levi, scheduled for 23 July, will be canceled. [passage omitted]

Israel: Netanyahu Adviser Leaves on 'Secret' Tour of Gulf Emirates

TA2107180196 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 21 Jul 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] This morning, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu sent his political adviser Dore Gold on a secret trip to the Gulf emirates. Our political correspondent Dan Scemama reports that Dr. Gold left for Oman and Qatar in order to clarify to their leaders that the Netanyahu government is committed to continuing the peace process. Foreign Minister David Levi has also sent messages to Arab leaders over the past few days in an attempt to restore calm in their relations with Israel.

Israel: Netanyahu Comments on U.S. Aid to Egypt

TA2107103596 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 21 Jul 96 pp A1, A12

[Report by Aluf Ben]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu has said recently that the U.S. aid for Egypt should not be harmed and that it is imperative that it continue. This message has been relayed to Israel's friends in Washington in view of the upcoming visit to the United States of Egyptian President Husni Mubarak.

Israeli officials estimate that the positive line Mubarak adopted during Netanyahu's visit and their meeting last week were affected by his upcoming visit to Washington and his desire to receive a warm welcome in the U.S. Congress, where Netanyahu and his policy have wide support. Netanyahu explained to Mubarak what he meant when he told the Congress of his intention to waive part of the U.S. aid to Israel in the future.

Egypt seriously fears that its share of U.S. aid might be impaired following Netanyahu's speech. According to reports arriving in Jerusalem, after the speech, Egyptian officials contacted American officials and Jews asking whether Netanyahu's remarks might evoke pressures by Congress to have Mubarak make similar suggestions regarding aid cuts. [passage omitted]

According to reports arriving in Israel, congressmen have suggested that the foreign aid to Egypt be cut by 5 percent, which would allow a doubling of the aid extended to Jordan. [passage omitted]

Following his meeting with Mubarak, Netanyahu had a discussion with Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa. In the discussion, the two argued about Palestinian activity in Jerusalem. Musa inquired as to Israel's opposition to the activity of various bodies in the city, and the Israeli prime minister said he will not accept activities of a governmental nature. According to one version, which has been denied by the prime minister's bureau, Musa also told Netanyahu that there are several serious issues on the agenda which Mubarak chose not to raise in their discussion, primarily the nuclear issue which has been delaying the multinational talks. According to this version, Musa said that although it has been decided not to bring up the issue at the current stage, it is not off the agenda. [passage omitted]

Dr. Dore Gold, the prime minister's political adviser, will soon visit countries in the Persian Gulf and North

Africa which have contacts with Israel in order to establish contacts with their leaders and update them on the new government policies. Gold will apparently visit Oman, Qatar, Morocco, and Tunisia.

Netanyahu briefed the cabinet on his meeting with President Mubarak during the 19 July session, saying: "Since the new government was established, Arabic media has been portraying it in monstrous terms. The visit to Egypt was part of an attempt by Israel and Egypt to diffuse tensions."

According to the prime minister, the visit to Israel by Jordanian Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti last week and the meetings Dore Gold held with his Egyptian counterpart 'Usamah al-Baz contributed significantly to the success of the visit. Netanyahu said the meeting with Mubarak was first scheduled to take place in Alexandria, but it was moved to Cairo and followed every ceremonial code. Netanyahu said that in his meetings in Cairo, he presented the government's stands and concepts regarding the political process. "I made it clear that no compromise will be made on Jerusalem and that our stand on the Golan issue is different from the previous government's." He added that good personal relations were established with the Egyptian president and that they discussed tightening economic cooperation, mainly in the field of energy.

Netanyahu added: "In the meeting, I presented Israel's commitment to the agreements signed with the Palestinians and stressed the need for the Palestinian Authority to implement its commitments, primarily on security matters and Jerusalem." He added that he updated Mubarak on the alleviations of the closure and on the expected Levi-'Arafat meeting, and gave him a letter from President 'Ezer Weizman in which the president announced he is pardoning the Palestinian female prisoners.

Israel: South Africa's Mandela Postpones Visit Upon PA Request

TA2107110096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 21 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] South African President Nelson Mandela has postponed his official visit to Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinian Authority [PA], which was scheduled for mid-August, by about two months. Our correspondent has learned that after Mandela received an invitation to visit Egypt, too, the PA asked that he combine all the visits in one tour. Israel received the South African decision to postpone the visit with understanding.

Israel: Levi on Cairo Talks, 'Arafat Meeting, Syrian Track

TA1907171496 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 19 Jul 96

[Interview with Israeli Foreign Minister David Levi by political correspondent Shlomo Ganor in the studio on 19 July — recorded, in Hebrew with Arabic subtitles; processed from the Hebrew]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Ganor] How do you view yesterday's meeting between Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and Egyptian President Mubarak in Cairo?

[Levi] I believe it was a good meeting in terms of both content and understanding. Chemistry was created after the positions were made clear, because the feeling before was that an antipeace government which intended to keep things at a standstill had been established here. This prejudice had loomed over the meeting, and I am glad things were clarified and that ties and an open dialogue were established. Egypt is the first Arab country with which we made peace. It is a big and important Middle East country, and we want to develop a truly open dialogue with it.

[Ganor] How does Jerusalem intend to keep moving the peace process forward?

[Levi] It is our goal to promote the peace process. This is not a strategic decision; this is our hope. The entire nation wants it, regardless of the differences. This government views peace as a value. Peace can be attained only through dialogue. We intend to talk to all parties, primarily the Palestinian Authority [PA]. We have announced we will respect agreements when the other side does so too. This is a basic rule worldwide and especially here. It is necessary to establish confidence. It is not only one side that must fulfill the agreements; the other side must do its part and reciprocate. We recognize the PA as the address for the Palestinian people. It is, after all, an elected body. We intend to hold an open and ongoing dialogue with it.

[Ganor] And you will be holding this dialogue personally next week in a meeting with PA Chairman Yasir 'Arafat. What will feature in your meeting?

[Levi] The main point will be to find a way to work together while acknowledging each other's difficulties and making the other side understand them. The question to be answered is: How? We have agreements; how do we meet them? There are problems; how do we solve them? Talks have been going on in every sphere; how do we formalize them? I am not in favor of making declarations and certainly not threats, but I am for a candid and open dialogue, and this is what I intend to do.

[Ganor] You will definitely have to comment on the Hebron issue.

[Levi] I will deal with every issue. I will come with answers, and I expect him to answer the questions I will present. We will make progress only if we work on problems together, while both parties carefully observe the agreement.

[Ganor] What about the Syrians and the Lebanese?

[Levi] A dialogue started — with difficulties, to my regret — with the Madrid process. Labor, which formed the government that followed ours at that time, held a dialogue with the Syrians but, as you can see, nothing came of it. We have to learn, together, what the political errors were and how to overcome these hurdles in order to speak openly. If peace is good for both sides, it is a goal for Israel, and I hope it is the same for Syria. If peace does not serve both parties and if both sides do not aspire to it, there will be no progress. If Syria really wants peace, however, it should consider this: What did its approach promote so far? Nothing. This is why we must enter negotiations without preconditions. I cannot have Israel force its stand on Syria as a precondition. Such a thing is out of the question. Syria, too, cannot force us to accept its terms as preconditions for a dialogue. Dialogue is when you deliberate on the issues and make progress toward peace.

As for Lebanon, we do not want an inch of its land. We are where we are only because of the security need to protect our citizens and settlements. If Lebanon were really a place that does not pose a security risk to our settlements and citizens, our only hope would be to live in peace with it in an atmosphere of good-neighborliness. This is where Syria comes in. It must make a contribution — perhaps its first — to demonstrate that it wants peace and must create what is called confidence-building measures. If Syria opted for something constructive....

[Ganor, interrupting] For example?

[Levi] For example, stopping Hizballah's operations against Israel. Hizballah cannot continue its acts of terror against the State of Israel while we talk peace. The two cannot coincide.

Israel: Remains of 2 Israeli Soldiers Arrive From Beirut

TA2107094496 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0900 GMT 21 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A plane carrying the caskets of IDF [Israel Defense Forces] soldiers Rahamim Alsheikh and Yosef Fink landed at Ben-Gurion Airport an hour ago. The remains of the two soldiers will be identified by Major General Gad Navon, chief army chaplain.

The other part of the exchange deal with Hizballah is meanwhile under way in south Lebanon. The remains of dozens of terrorists killed in incidents in the area are being handed over to the Red Cross in the south Lebanese village of Tibnit. In addition, 17 SLA [South Lebanese Army] soldiers, who were released after Rahamim Alshekh's and Yosef Fink's caskets were transferred to the Red Cross in Beirut this morning, are also due to be handed over in Tibnit. Lebanese representatives at the Tibnit checkpoint are also to receive prisoners released from al-Khiyam prison.

Israel: Netanyahu Says Policy on Iran Unchanged Despite Body Swap

TA2107130196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1200 GMT 21 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Speaking after the arrival of the caskets containing the remains of IDF [Israel Defense Forces] soldiers Rahamim Alsheikh and Yosef Fink, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu said he hopes the remaining MIA's and POW's will be brought to Israel. Netanyahu emphasized that the deal with Hizballah was unrelated to other issues and Israel's policy toward Iran has not changed. Nevertheless, the prime minister added, the IDF's presence in Lebanon is for defensive purposes alone. If Hizballah changes its positions, we will also change ours, Netanyahu said. Israel would be pleased to see Hizballah moderate its activities.

At a news conference held to sum up the return of the bodies of the two Israeli soldiers in exchange for those of Lebanese terrorists, Netanyahu stressed that no terrorists were released from Israeli prisons. He thanked all those involved in the negotiations for the return of the remains of the IDF soldiers and particularly thanked Chancellor Kohl and Intelligence Coordinator Schmidbauer.

Chief of Staff Amnon Shahaq thanked the Alsheikh and Fink families for the patience they displayed during the negotiations and for their nobility of character in agreeing to put off the return of their sons' remains in order to try to help with the location and release of other Israeli MIA's. Ya'aqov Peri, the prime minister's adviser on POW and MIA affairs, said the successful conclusion of today's body swap is an encouraging sign for future operations. A short while ago, the Alsheikh and Fink families were officially notified that the remains of their sons have been positively identified.

Meanwhile in Lebanon, Israel returned the bodies of 105 terrorists killed in clashes with the IDF in south

Lebanon. The SLA [South Lebanese Army] returned 18 bodies that were buried in areas under its control. The SLA also released 45 prisoners from al-Khiyam Prison. For its part, Hizballah released 17 SLA personnel.

Israel: Netanyahu, Germany's Kohl Discuss Ron Arad; Mordekhay Mentions Syria

TA2107153696 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1400 GMT 21 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Today's body swap constitutes an encouraging sign concerning the continuation of the negotiations regarding the other Israeli MIA's. This was said today by Ya'aqov Peri, the prime minister's adviser on POW and MIA affairs, at a news conference also attended by the prime minister, the chief of staff, and the defense minister. The heads of the Israeli defense establishment promised that efforts to obtain information on the POW and MIA issue will continue until, as they put it, the last Israeli MIA returns home. Our political correspondent Udi Segal reports:

[Begin recording] [Segal] Israeli officials today expressed the hope that the circumstances that made the return of the bodies of the MIA's possible will result in a breakthrough regarding the other MIA's, as well as Ron Arad. This issue came up in a conversation held several hours ago between Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and German Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

[Netanyahu] The return of our dead soldiers is a step in the right direction. I hope we can expect additional steps in the near future.

[Segal] Officials spoke today about general prospects but were unwilling to refer to concrete information. The prime minister said he hopes this constitutes a turning point but added that it is too early to say. Ya'aqov Peri said he considered today's body swap an encouraging sign for the process of returning the POW's and MIA's home. This may be why Defense Minister Yitzhaq Mordekhay took the trouble during today's news conference to send an unusual message to Tehran and Damascus.

[Mordekhay] As a goodwill gesture, I want to thank all those who have dealt with this humanitarian act, whether in Lebanon, Syria, Iran, or anywhere else.

[Segal] The prime minister stated that the policy toward Iran has not changed and that this deal was worked out on the basis of a basic moral principle with disregard for the fundamental conflict with that country. At the same time, it is clear today that Germany's policy of advocating a critical dialogue with Iran, as opposed to the Israeli concept that calls for the total isolation of the ayatollahs, has been significantly strengthened as it is bearing fruit.

What was it that brought about today's significant development? It is certainly possible to speak here about Iranian, Syrian, and Lebanese political considerations which helped boost the deal. At least some of these considerations stem from the situation created in the wake of Operation Grapes of Wrath.

[Peri] The international pressure brought to bear by Israel in the past and at the present time; internal problems within Hizballah and Lebanon; the fact that Syria did not interfere; the part played by the Lebanese Government; and the major part played by Germany — all these factors ultimately made this deal possible.

[Segal] Peri emphasized that Israel insisted on the principle set by the late Yitzhaq Rabin: bodies in exchange for bodies and living prisoners in exchange for living prisoners. Israeli sources now hope that today's move signals a far-reaching change which will enable us, as the chief of staff put it, to do the right thing by the other families whose dear ones' fate remains unknown. [end recording]

Israel: Germany's Schmidbauer Foresees Future Swaps, Vows To Pursue Efforts

TA2107183296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1800 GMT 21 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] German mediator Bernd Schmidbauer met with Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu this afternoon and promised to continue to try to locate navigator Ron Arad and the Israeli soldiers missing in action since the battle of al-Sultan Ya'qub.

Schmidbauer said that today's swap deal was the first step and that there are signs that it will be followed by additional ones. He reported that the contacts will continue but refused to disclose any details. Schmidbauer noted that all the parties sought to maintain a level of secrecy which enabled them to obtain positive results. The German mediator defended his country's relations with Iran and asserted that these ties helped secure the release of prisoners who had been condemned to death.

Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports that Schmidbauer also met with the family of navigator Ron Arad but did not report any details about Arad's fate.

Israel: No Information on Arad; No Change in Iranian Policy Seen

TA2207053396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0400 GMT 22 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] There is no new information about Ron Arad and the POW's of the battle of al-Sultan Ya'qub. This was made clear by authoritative circles after meetings German mediator Bernd Schmidbauer held in Israel yesterday. Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports that the circles maintained that remarks made here following the return of the bodies of servicemen Fink and Alsheikh should be toned down because this move does not represent any new developments. Schmidbauer will meet Defense Minister Yitzhaq Mordekhay this afternoon.

Former Mosad head Shabtay Shavit has warned against cultivating illusions that a breakthrough on Ron Arad is imminent. He said that the current swap deal does not constitute a change in Iranian policy or strategy. He stressed that the POW and MIA issue is high on the Mosad's agenda. Shavit spoke to our correspondent Karmela Menashe.

Israel: Female Palestinian Prisoners Release Said To Depend on IDF

TA2207090796 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 22 Jul 96 p 12

[Report by Evelyn Gordon]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] OC Central Command Maj.-Gen. 'Uzi Dayan will review the files of two Palestinian women prisoners involved in the killing of Israelis, and will decide shortly whether to pardon them, the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] Spokesman said yesterday.

Dayan's predecessor, Ilan Biran, had refused to pardon the two women last year, even though this aroused the anger of the Palestinian Authority [PA]. The PA said Israel had promised to free all Palestinian women prisoners, irrespective of their crimes, as part of the Oslo Accords. According to the IDF Spokesman, however, Dayan has now been instructed by Chief of General Staff Lt.-Gen. Amnon Lipkin-Shahaq to reconsider this decision. The spokesman said Shahaq gave this order on the government's instructions.

The two women are Abir al-Wahidi, who commanded the Fatah cell that killed Tzvi Klein of 'Ofra in 1991, and Lamiyah Ma'ruf, who killed soldier David Manos in 1984. Since both crimes were committed in the territories and the women were tried in military courts, Dayan technically has sole authority to decide whether or not to pardon them. However, government attorney Mikha'el Blass told the High Court of Justice yesterday that Dayan's decision will be made in coordination with the government. Blass made this statement during a hearing on a petition against the women's release filed by Klein's widow, Ora; Manos's mother, Gracia; and the Terror Victims Association.

Justices Aharon Baraq, Shlomo Levin, and Dalya Dorner said they could not deal with the petition until Dayan had made his decision; however, they ordered Dayan to notify the families immediately if he did decide to pardon the women, and to defer the actual release for 48 hours afterwards in order to give the families time to repetition the court. [passage omitted]

Israel: Palestinian Security Agents Kidnap Israeli Arab to Ramallah

TA2007115096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0700 GMT 20 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Palestinian security agents have kidnapped an Israeli Arab, 'Abd-al-Salam Hirbawi, from East Jerusalem and taken him to Ramallah. The incident comes against the background of construction work in the plaza of the Coptic Church in Jerusalem.

Our correspondent Aviv Bushinsky reports that the police and the security establishment take a grave view of the abduction because it constitutes a violation of the agreement with the Palestinians.

Israel: IDF Demands Release of Israeli Arab by 'Afternoon' of 20 Jul

TA2007115196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 20 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] This morning, a senior officer from the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] Central Command contacted General al-Hajj Isma'il Jabr, the commander of the Palestinian Police in the West Bank, and demanded that he arrange the release of 'Abd-al-Salam Hirbawi, an Israeli citizen who was abducted from his home in Jerusalem early this morning by Jibril al-Rujub's security agents. Hirbawi is being held in Ramallah.

Central Command sources told our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem that the defense establishment takes a grave view of the incident which constitutes a flagrant violation of the agreement with the Palestinians. The Palestinian general was informed that if the kidnapped man was not released by this afternoon, the IDF would be forced to employ sanctions against the Palestinian Police.

Our correspondent notes that there is no certainty that the Palestinian Police officials will persuade al-Rujub to release the man. Al-Rujub receives his orders directly from Yasir 'Arafat, who is currently on a visit to Cairo.

Israel: Gaza Closure Eased; West Bank Closure Easing Postponed

TA2107052996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0400 GMT 21 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The conflict caused by the abduction of East Jerusalem resident 'Abd-al-Salam Hirbawi to Ramallah has provoked sharp Israeli steps against the Palestinian Authority [PA]. Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports that Major General 'Uzi Dayan, chief of the Central Command, halted the implementation of the decision to ease the closure on Palestinians in Judaea and Samaria that was scheduled to start today. A closure was imposed on Ramallah yesterday as part of the attempt to pressure the Palestinians to release Hirbawi. Today Maj. Gen. Gabi Ofir, the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] commander of Judaea and Samaria, will discuss the affair with Palestinian police chiefs. Last night, heads of the Palestinian Security Services discussed the affair with 'Arafat.

The closure on the Gaza Strip is being eased as of this morning, and some 10,000 more Palestinian workers from the Gaza Strip crossed into Israel through the Erez checkpoint. Our correspondent Nisim Qeynan reports from Erez that the thousands of workers who received permits to enter Israel are married men aged 30 or more. In addition, the number of Palestinians allowed to work in the Erez industrial zone was increased, the traffic of trucks and taxicabs from the territories into Israel was facilitated, and medical services were made more accessible. Our correspondent notes that strict security measures are being taken at Erez.

Israel: IDF Says Ramallah Under Closure Until Release

TA2107063096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1500 GMT 20 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] At this time, the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] is imposing a closure on the city of Ramallah and is preventing Israeli citizens from driving to the city, in order to pressure the Palestinians to release 'Abd-al-Salam Hirbawi of East Jerusalem. Central Command officers have said that the closure will not be lifted until the abducted man is released. The defense establishment is considering taking additional steps against the Palestinian Authority [PA] following Hirbawi's abduction.

The Palestinian Police are saying that only Yasir 'Arafat can order Jibril al-Rujub to free the man. Yasir 'Arafat returned from Cairo this afternoon, and is expected to intervene in the affair.

Members of the Hirbawi family complained that al-Rujub's men, with guns drawn, abducted 'Abd-al-Salam from his house early this morning. They told our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem that the men came to their house near the 'Atarot Airport inside the Jerusalem city limits, and took him at gunpoint while shooting in the air. The family also claims that, following an order from Yasir 'Arafat, al-Rujub's men helped the Coptic Church in the Old City of Jerusalem take possession of a storage building which the family owns.

Our correspondent notes that many East Jerusalem Muslims are displeased with the incident, and many claim that the PA is helping Christians seize Muslim property.

Israel: Hirbawi To Be Released in 'Hours'; No Decision on Ramallah

TA2107184396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1800 GMT 21 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Jibril al-Rujub has said that the abducted man, 'Abd-al-Salam Hirbawi, will be released within several hours. Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem was told that Palestinian security agents are expected to bring Hirbawi to the District Coordination and Liaison offices in Ramallah, where he will be questioned by IDF [Israel Defense Forces] and Israeli police officers and then allowed to return home.

Army sources said that only after Hirbawi is released and allowed to present his version of events will the IDF decide which steps to take and whether to lift the closure imposed on Ramallah in the wake of the kidnapping.

Israel: Peres To Pursue Election Fraud Issue, Criticizes Netanyahu

TA1907135196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1300 GMT 19 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Former Prime Minister Shim'on Peres said today that there were irregularities and fraud in the elections and that Labor is seeking legal grounds for filing a petition with the High Court of Justice against the elections results.

Regarding the visit to Egypt by Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, Peres said that the speech Netanyahu made in Cairo should have been made in Washington. He also criticized the fact that the prime minister is not meeting 'Arafat but is sending his adviser Dore Gold or Foreign Minister David Levi. Mr. Peres was speaking at the Tel Aviv Commercial

Club, and our correspondent Pe'erli Shahar reported his remarks.

Israel: Peres Urged To Resign, Avoid 'Castrating' Younger Leaders

TA2207100496 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 22 Jul 96 p 6

[Report by Susan Hattis Rolef]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Current goings-on in the Labor Party give one a feeling of deja vu. Professor Yehezqel Dror says it all reminds him of the aftermath of the 1977 upheaval, when he was the party's "chief scientist." My own feeling is that we are going through a repetition of 1988.

If press reports are correct, Labor leader Shim'on Peres is laboring under the delusion that the story will end as it did then, in another national unity government.

But that's the last thing Labor needs — and I said it back in 1988 too. What Labor needs today is a transitional period of no more than a year during which the contenders for the party leadership can start preparing for the big contest.

Peres groupies — and there are still quite a few around — keep saying there's no one worthy to replace him. But that's pigheaded nonsense.

Potential candidates Hayim Ramon, Ehud Baraq, Efrayim Sne and possibly 'Uzi Bar'am are all worthy contenders. The first three are ambitious and willful individuals who very much want the jobs which means the contest will be pretty loaded — but let's not forget the 21-year rivalry between Yitzhaq Rabin and Peres.

All four contenders are intelligent and well-educated, with a clear vision of the direction they would like to see Israel take. All have much more than just good looks and a bag full of cliches to offer the Israeli public.

But that isn't enough. Labor needs a man (or woman — Dalya Itzik would do if she were only willing to cut loose from Peres's apron strings) who can beat Binyamin Netanyahu under the new system.

And he'll have to be a good organizer, since his first task after the contest will be totally rehabilitating the party — as Netanyahu did with the Likud when he became its leader in 1993.

After a while the new leader might also consider setting up a shadow cabinet to allow the public a look at the team he will be presenting with a view to elections in 2000.

Whoever this leader is, it won't be Peres. Peres couldn't beat Begin and Shamir under the old system, and he couldn't beat Netanyahu under the new one.

When the national divide runs more or less down the center, the winner will always be the candidate who has that little extra to offer.

Rabin had it; Peres doesn't. He could perhaps stay at the helm of the battered Labor ship for another four years by politically castrating Labor's next leadership generation — but this would only achieve another bitter electoral defeat.

The ship needs repairs, yes; but more than that it needs a new skipper.

Unlike Yitzhaq Shamir who after the Likud's 1992 defeat simply kept the engines of the Likud ship (then in even worse shape than Labor today) running until the new skipper should step aboard, Peres seems determined to lead the Labor vessel onto a sandbank. The fact that he has a vision of the deep blue ocean? It's no longer relevant.

One is left to wonder when someone more senior than former justice minister Hayim Tzadoq or former chairman of the Knesset Labor and Social Affairs Committee Yosi Katz will finally summon up the courage to stand in front of Peres and say to him: "Thank you, Shim'on, for all you have done — but it's time to step aside and clear the stage for the next generation."

When Rabin and Peres came on the scene as Labor's two contenders for the leadership in 1974 following Golda Me'ir's resignation, they were 52 and 51 years old respectively. Today Ramon is 46, Baraq 54, Sne 52 and Bar'am 59. It's their turn now.

In an interview that appeared last Friday, American TV personality Larry King told Mary Saguy, correspondent of the financial paper GLOBES, that "if you start believing you are more important than the story, you're in big trouble."

Peres appears to believe that he is the story — or, worse still, the man who holds the copyright over the story.

Israel: Labor MK Bar'am Urges Peres To Quit in 'at Least a Year'

TA2207111396 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 22 Jul 96 p A5

[Report by Yosi Werther]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] For the first time since the elections, Labor Knesset Member [MK] 'Uzi Bar'am called on party chairman Shim'on Peres to resign from his post in at least a year. Bar'am, who came in first in the Labor primaries, is considered a potential candidate for Labor chairman and a prime ministerial candidate. Until yesterday, he avoided commenting on the issue.

In view of reports on an initiative to leave Peres in the post for another three years, Bar'am told HA'ARETZ yesterday: "Peres can contribute a lot to the party, but he should know that his activity has a beginning and an end." According to Bar'am, the end should be next summer when, according to Labor's constitution, primaries for the party chairman and prime ministerial candidate should be held. So far, MK's Ehud Baraq and Efrayim Sne have announced that they are running. Hayim Ramon said he will run only if the party decides to hold open primaries. [passage omitted]

Israel: SHAS, NRP Threaten To Quit Cabinet Over Religious Portfolio

TA2207062396 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 22 Jul 96 p 1

[Report by Michal Yudelman]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] National Religious Party [NRP] leader Zvulun Hammer waved a letter of resignation at Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu last night during a stormy meeting of coalition heads.

Netanyahu had convened the coalition leaders in an effort to resolve the crisis of the Religious Affairs portfolio, which is being claimed by both SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim] and the NRP.

Both parties have threatened to quit the coalition if Netanyahu gives the ministry, which both are to hold in rotation, to the other first.

Each party has claimed that Netanyahu had promised to let it be first, thus giving it power over hundreds of political appointments and financial allocations to its religious institutions.

SHAS is also demanding the appointment of MK [Knesset member] Shlomo Benizri as deputy minister of national infrastructure, as promised by Netanyahu. However, National Infrastructure Minister Ari'el Sharon, who was not consulted, has refused to appoint a deputy minister.

SHAS sources said that having learned that Netanyahu caves in to political pressure, party leaders gave him an ultimatum to give it the ministry by noon yesterday, or it would quit the government. Labor and Social Affairs Minister Eli Yishay and Interior Minister Eli Suissa marched into his office, along with party leader Arye Der'i, to deliver their resignation letters.

Hammer's outbreak last night seems to indicate that Netanyahu sided with SHAS in the meeting.

Netanyahu commended SHAS for its contribution to the coalition and asked for an extension until tonight to solve the crisis, assuring them he would appoint a SHAS man religious affairs minister. SHAS's ministers agreed to give him a few hours to resolve the issue.

Hammer, furious at the news, said if he found it was intended to announce the ministry was going to SHAS first, he would send his letter of resignation to the meeting instead of going himself.

Hammer said the NRP should have the portfolio first, "because we can represent, as far as rabbis and religious judges are concerned, a better, more correct way."

He stressed that if Netanyahu gives the ministry to SHAS first, "I will consider it a grave insult to all religious Zionists, a denial of our relations with the government from the point of view of the state's Jewish Zionist way of life, and a stinging slap to a very loyal, disinterested partner. I will feel as though they're not interested in internal affairs, social, and Jewish issues.

"We have been treated in a very unfair, indecent, and unfriendly way. If the intention is to bend us, we won't fold. We'll quit. It's a matter of civilized government, a joint way, and view of the future."

Israel: Likud Settlement Leaders Quit 'Pro-NRP' Settlers Council

TA2207111596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 22 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A rift in the Council of Jewish Settlements in Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza: The heads of eight settlements and local councils — Giv'at Ze'ev, Ari'el, Alfey Menashe, Har Adar, Oranit, Ma'ale Efrayim, Betar 'Ilit, and Bet Arye — announced today that they are quitting the council and establishing an association that would represent their forum. According to them, the council does not express the settlements' needs and is headed by a group of political activists.

The eight stressed that they will not attend a meeting between the council heads and Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu scheduled for next week, and will set a separate date.

The council spokesman told our correspondent Gil Litman that he regrets the move, noting that the election results have proven that unity is strength. He called on the eight to rethink their move.

[In a similar report on Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1005 GMT on 22 July, Gil Litman notes that "the eight lead secular councils." "Most of them are Likud members, which creates the impression that the rift is politically motivated: Likud members quit, breaking away from the pro-NRP, National Religious Party, council heads, who have always led settlement movements in Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza."

The report goes on to say that "the head of the Betar 'Ilit Local Council, an ultra-Orthodox settlement, is still deliberating whether to join the new forum or stay on the council."]

Israel; Knesset Committee Lifts Minister Eytan's Immunity

TA2207095696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0900 GMT 22 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Knesset House Committee this morning decided to lift the parliamentary immunity of Minister Refa'el Eytan so that he could be put on trial. Our correspondent Yo'el Nir reports that the discussion was a mere formality because Minister Eytan had announced he is willing to waive his immunity. Neither the state attorney nor Eytan were present at the discussion.

Israel: U.S. Government Criticized for Allowing Syria 'Free Rein'

TA2207101696 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 22 Jul 96 p 6

[Report by Yohanan Ramati]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Until recently, President al-Asad could peddle drugs, provide a haven for terrorists operating against Turkey, Israel and Jordan, keep Secretary of State Christopher twiddling his thumbs for hours and still be courted by the US? Why?

One compelling reason might well be the story behind the downing of PanAm Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland in 1989.

Israeli intelligence has long known that Syria's pet terrorist chief, Ahmad Jibril, was involved in that incident. So has the CIA. But the details only came to light earlier this year when a CIA department head who had worked in Mideast antiterrorism gave an interview to the German magazine FOCUS. [passage omitted]

But the protection President Clinton and the State Department extended to the al-Asad regime went far beyond Lockerbie.

It involved sacrificing the independence of Lebanon and the interests of its Christian community; condoning Kurdish and Palestinian terrorism from Syrian or Lebanese bases against Turkey, Israel and Jordan, and ignoring evidence pointing to Syrian responsibility for the March 1992 explosion at the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires, where my daughter was among the more than two dozen killed.

Hamstrung by the guilty secret and its ramifications — among them sponsoring UN sanctions against a country for something it didn't do — the US allowed Syria free rein. After all, exposing al-Asad's involvement in Lockerbie would have laid bare to the international community the US's cynical duplicity toward Libya, and that would have stirred up plenty of trouble in the Moslem world.

So al-Asad could carry on happily peddling drugs, supporting terrorists and keeping Warren Christopher waiting. And Clinton was still eager for al-Asad to get the Golan Heights.

The State Department will be reluctant to shift gears. It still dreams about separating Syria from Iran. And whatever their own problems with Syria, most Arab states, including Egypt, will strenuously oppose leaving Israel possessing any "occupied territory."

But American options have become more limited now that, following the debacle that was Operation Grapes of Wrath, France has returned to the Middle East and is cooperating with Syria, Iraq and Iran alike (and Russia may be expected to follow suit once its new government is firmly in the saddle).

Helping secularism survive in Turkey, strengthening Israel by leaving it in possession of the Golan and backing a Turkish-Israeli-Jordanian alliance as a counter to Syria, Iraq and Iran would be good for US interests in the region — but it goes against established policy.

There is little chance of the State Department altering its traditional parameters of Mideast policy. But the US administration may be influenced by Congress and public opinion.

If Binyamin Netanyahu can exploit the information regarding Syria's activities he has received from intelligence and other sources to persuade American public opinion and Congress of the damage to the US if it persists in its current policy toward Syria, he has an outside chance of achieving a strategic change in that policy.

He will surely be aided by US anger over reports that those who carried out the recent deadly bombing of US military quarters in Dhahran were trained near al-Ladhiqiyah in Syria, and by al-Asad's recent rapprochement with Iraq.

Israel: Russian-Language Daily Urges Clinton To Understand Plight

TA2107103096 Tel Aviv NASHA STRANA in Russian 17 Jul 96 pp 12-13

[Article by Valeriy Smolenskiy: "Carpet Rolled out by the Great Chief in the Big White Wigwam"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] America played the leading role in enabling Rabin's and 'Arafat's passage to Oslo and from Oslo to Cairo. No one doubts that. Neither has anyone forgotten the frankly crude pressure, in the form of a threat to strip Israel of financial aid, applied by President Bush and Secretary of State Baker on the Shamir government, or Baker's insolent advice to the Israeli premier to call the State Department should his policies change.

President Clinton and Secretary of State Christopher belong to a different class of statesmen.... There is still pressure, of course, but it is being applied in a more refined manner....

Actually, there was no need to prod the Rabin-Peres-Sarid trio. Bush and Baker could only dream of such obedient partners, who managed to resuscitate the terminally ill PLO and transform "ugly duckling" 'Arafat into a gorgeous swan-partner. The initiative was promptly approved by Washington, which then proceeded to take action to legalize the PLO. 'Arafat received the Nobel peace prize. Soon enough the entire process of negotiations came under the watchful supervision of the Great Chief of the White Wigwam and of officials working in the innermost depths of the government. The White Wigwam drew up directives regulating the moves as well as the pace of the negotiations. Under U.S. auspices and in the total absence of any opposition from the Israeli Government, the Gaza First agreement was followed by Gaza and Jericho First, and 650 million shekels were diverted from budgets allocated for the aliya, to be spent on redeploying IDF [Israel Defense Forces] troops. The strategically vital Dayr al-Qarantal was handed over to the PLO, and the boundaries of the city of Jericho were extended, reducing our troops' capability to control the southern section of the Jordan Rift Valley. The PLO was further given the right to patrol the Gaza coast, a move that opened the 40-km stretch to a massive supply of heavy armaments to Gaza.

The close U.S. patronage was obvious even during the drafting of the final agreement. That was the only reason Palestinian delegate Khalid al-Qidrah had the courage to announce publicly before the Cairo conference: "We have a right to establish a state... after the withdrawal from the West Bank." [passage omitted]

Up to the Israeli elections, Washington tried to avoid annoying the Israeli public, and its policy was therefore conducted through the perfectly obedient Rabin and Peres, who were incapable of saying "No!" out loud. Binyamin Netanyahu did not say no during his Washington visit, either, but he quite firmly let it be known that he would not always say yes, particularly when Jewish land and the Jewish state's survival are at stake. In his conduct, he was actually implementing Golda Me'ir's famous declaration: "The United States is our almost only friend, and a mighty one at that. There is therefore no shame in occasionally giving in to the United States." She added, however: "We do not have to say 'yes' every time."

Netanyahu has reached the conclusion that now is the time to stop playing the role of a compliant, unquestioning disciple, because the state's survival is in tangible danger.

Clinton must have understood all that, although he seems to be unable to fully grasp that we cannot follow any other path!

Well, they say that a drop of water can bore a hole in a rock. Surely, that meeting between the two leaders was not their last. The President will eventually understand that Tel Aviv and Central Israel are not defended in 'Afula or Hadera, but in the Jordan Rift Valley, on the hilltops of Judaea and Samaria, on the Golan Heights, and in the sands of the Gaza Strip.

Clinton, a pragmatist, will definitely come to understand the drift of the new situation in Israel.

His understanding will be facilitated less by the imminent elections than by the Arab world's weaknesses, the reception the Israeli premier received in the powerful Congress, and... the huge crater in Dhahran, 10 meters deep and 30 meters across. Nothing is as convincing as physical evidence.

All those who expected the prime minister to recant in the White Wigwam, were disappointed, and there will be none of that in the future, either. We should memorize the following old observation: "We have to be self-sufficient, to free ourselves of the close embrace of alien governments in general and of the Americans in particular."

Future heads of state should remember that a bent spine is a sign of bondage worse than the Israelites' enslavement in Egypt.

Israel: Press Comments on Outcome of Netanyahu-Mubarak Meeting

TA1907151696

[FBIS Report] All Israeli papers on 19 July carry extensive reportage on the meeting in Cairo on 18 July between Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and Egyptian President Husni Mubarak, as well as comments on its outcome.

In a 1,000-word editorial on page 4 entitled "Welcome Change in Cairo," Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English writes that Mubarak's comments at the joint news conference "were a welcome change from the messages emanating from the rest of the Arab world this week." The paper notes that "it is to be hoped that Egypt, which until yesterday had joined the rest of the Arab world in accusing Netanyahu of 'killing the process,' will now persuade its Arab brethren to modify their tone as well — because it is this tone, rather than Netanyahu's statements, which has indeed made the future of the process look shaky this week."

A 500-word commentary by Aluf Ben entitled "Interests, Not Ideology" on page A6 of Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew notes that "Binyamin Netanyahu went to Cairo yesterday for one purpose: to convince Husni Mubarak that he is not Yitzhaq Shamir and that the new Israeli Government seriously means to pursue the peace process and is not just trying to mark time in order to bury the Oslo accords." Upon returning to Israel, the paper writes, "Netanyahu had good reason to be pleased. Mubarak delivered the goods, saying he was pleasantly surprised by the positions the prime minister presented in their meeting." For his part, Mubarak, who is due in Washington soon, "wanted to show a successful meeting with Netanyahu, even though he seemed ill at ease standing next to him at their joint news conference."

In a 700-word editorial on page 2 entitled "Mubarak Understands Netanyahu," Tel Aviv HATZOFE in Hebrew writes that "contrary to the pessimistic forecasts about an impending rift with the largest Arab country in the region, it should be noted that not only did the prime minister not enter a confrontation with the Egyptian president but, quite the contrary, they reached an understanding." "It turns out," the paper notes, "that Egypt is now prepared to fully cooperate with the Netanyahu government with one goal in mind: to advance the peace process. Having said that, however, one must not ignore the fact that despite the good atmosphere in the Netanyahu-Mubarak meeting, each side stressed its own positions and the path it believes should be pursued in order to advance to a true and lasting peace in the region."

In a 300-word commentary on page 5 of Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew entitled "The Beginning of a Wonderful Friendship," 'Oded Granot writes that "this headline is exaggerated, of course. It would be very hard for a true friendship to be built between Mubarak and Netanyahu over the abyss that separates the two men in the political sphere, and this gap was not closed in the Cairo encounter." Speculating on the reasons for reduced tension, he notes that Netanyahu may have "managed to convince Mubarak that he has no intention of freezing or delaying the peace process." The commentary ends by noting that "the Israeli Government can only stand to gain from the low-interest credit Mubarak extended to Netanyahu yesterday. After Jordan, it is now Egypt that is telling the Arab world that Netanyahu must be given a break. Let there be no doubt, however, that this break might come to a sudden end if Mubarak finds that Netanyahu has failed to make good on his word. Then the friendship will also end."

A 400-word commentary by Hemi Shalev on the same page of MA'ARIV entitled "He Went to Egypt and Came Back Pleased With Himself" says that in Egypt, Netanyahu underwent "trial by fire and came out visibly unscathed. The president gave him a certificate of legitimacy — albeit a temporary and conditional one — which rid him of the image of a fanatical Arab-basher and turned him, at least for the next few months, into an equal partner in the Middle East dialogue." Shalev writes that "for the first time, Netanyahu showed that his public relations skills are not good only to rebuff the arguments of the Arabs but also to win over their hearts." "It is too early to tell whether there has been a change in the strategy taken by Egypt which, in the days of the Labor government, sought to keep its distance from Israel in order to strengthen its pan-Arab standing but may now be considering a dialogue with Jerusalem in order to attain the same goal and be perceived as an able mediator between 'extreme' Israel and the worried Arab countries. In any event, Mubarak knows that, until next year, any attempt to persuade the U.S. Administration to pressure Israel is out of the question. Until then, he has good reason to host Netanyahu courteously and be the first Arab leader who decides 'to give the Likud a chance'."

In a 300-word commentary on page 5 of Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew entitled "Netanyahu Received Legitimization," Shim'on Schiffer writes that "both Netanyahu and Mubarak evinced a great deal of responsibility yesterday. Any remarks by the Egyptian president, such as: 'There is nobody to talk to,' would have been enough to set the Middle East on fire. Mubarak, however, chose otherwise. He declared that Netanyahu gave him great hope, while Netanyahu, who did not say in private anything that he does not say in his public appearances, supplied enough political fuel to get the political wheels going in the near future."

Jordan: Prime Minister al-Kabariti Receives Telephone Call From Christopher

JN2107054896 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 0400 GMT 21 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The tour of Dennis Ross, U.S. coordinator of Middle East peace negotiations, in the region will include Jordan, Syria, Israel, and the Palestinian self-rule areas. Last night, Information Minister Dr. Marwan al-Mu'ashshir said that Ross will arrive in Amman on Thursday [25 July].

He also said that U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher telephoned Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti last night. He said the call is part of the coordination to advance the peace process and resume negotiations on all tracks as soon as possible. [passage omitted]

Jordan: Al-Kabariti Reportedly Advised Netanyahu To Change 'Tone'

JN2207123496 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic 22 Jul 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti said that he paid a surprise visit to Tel Aviv to advise [Israeli Prime Minister] Netanyahu to change his political tone during his visit in Cairo so that the Arab people will accept him rather than hate him.

During his meeting with the presidents of professional unions last week, al-Kabariti said that the Israeli prime minister took his advice and toned down his language, which explains why Netanyahu's statements in Cairo were different from those in Washington.

The presidents of professional unions did not hide their appreciation for the Syrian position when al-Kabariti complained to them about Syria's intransigent position on reconciliation with Israel and when al-Kabariti said Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam told him that Syria is not at all concerned about peace with Israel and that it is only maneuvering in order to gain time.

Jordan: Minister Says Netanyahu's Visit Delayed for Jewish Feast

JN2107061296 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 20 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Council of Minister held a session this evening chaired by Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti. The cabinet discussed a number of issues listed on its agenda. Answering reporters' questions following the session, Information Minister Dr. Marwan al-Mu'ashshir said that U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher talked with the prime minister on the telephone as part of coordination of efforts to advance the peace process and resume the negotiations on all tracks as soon as possible.

The information minister said Dennis Ross, the U.S. Administration's coordinator of the peace process, will arrive in Amman on Thursday [25 July]. He said that French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette will arrive in Jordan on Wednesday [24 July]. Dr. al-Mu'ashshir added that Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's visit to Jordan was delayed because of a Jewish feast observed on the day of his scheduled visit to Jordan. He said that another date will be fixed later.

Dr. al-Mu'ashshir said that talks are under way between Jordan and the United Kingdom to reschedule Britain's debts to Jordan.

Jordan: King Husayn Released From London Hospital

JN2207053996 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 22 Jul 96 p 1

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman (Agencies)—His Majesty King Husayn was discharged from hospital Sunday after surgery to remove an abscess, the King's personal physician Lieutenant General Samir Farraj said. Dr. Farraj said King Husayn was recuperating in his private residence in London, the city where he underwent the operation Friday night. He told the ASSOCIATED PRESS in a telephone interview from London and the King "is in a perfect shape and the abscess is nearly cured." Bahraini Leader Shaykh Issa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah called King Husayn Sunday to congratulate him on the success of the operation. King Husayn also received a telephone call from the Saudi Second Deputy Premier and Minister of Defence and Aviation Prince Sultan Bin 'Abd-al-'Aziz al Sa'ud.

Jordan: Al-Kabariti Addresses Marchers on Bread Price Increase

JN2107190596 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 21 Jul 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The first meeting of the extraordinary session of the House of Representatives began in the presence of Prime Minister 'Abd al-Karim al-Kabariti and the cabinet members. At the outset of the meeting, the text of the royal decree summoning Parliament for an extraordinary session as of 20 July was read. [passage omitted]

While Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti was on his way to the Parliament building to attend the first meeting of the House of Representatives' current extraordinary session, he encountered representatives of professional unions and opposition parties who were staging a march on the change in the mechanism of subsidizing wheat and fodder.

The prime minister told those participating in the march that the democratic atmosphere prevailing in Jordan has enabled all to express their opinion on issues the homeland faces, and that responsible freedom is the one which makes all speak with the voice of the homeland and not the voice of any other. He said that the doors are open to them and that he welcomes them at any time to meet with their representatives for a responsible, constructive, and positive dialogue.

The prime minister explained the reasons and justifications for the government's decision, which is based on the powers the law has granted it. He said he is responsible for this decision as a national decision that seeks to achieve self-reliance and reduce the deficit, and that this decision is part of the structural reform program.

Jordan: Information Minister Warns Publishers Against Violating Press Laws

JN1807164796 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1100 GMT 18 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Information Minister Dr. Marwan al-Mu'ashshir met with the publishers and owners of weekly newspapers this morning. He delivered a message from the government, saying that it will not be lenient about implementing the Press and Publication Law and other relevant laws, including the penal code, against any encroachment on national unity, public decency, or relations with fraternal Arab states.

Al-Mu'ashshir said: We should all avoid harming the homeland and the decency to which our community adheres. The freedom of press and publications, as guaranteed by the law, requires responsibility in taking the law into account. The law sets controls designed to preserve the social fabric and consolidate national unity, which is the reason behind the homeland's impregnability and strength.

He added: These controls are also designed to prevent harm to the public decency or the feelings of our community, which is proud of its values and heritage, as well as to avoid harming or defaming the leaders of fraternal states. Harming these leaders will reflect negatively on our country's relations with them.

The information minister continued: The Jordanian press' recent experience with openness has prompted successive Jordanian governments to occasionally turn a blind eye to encroachments, which they considered to be the results of the maturation of journalistic openness. These governments frequently exercised patience until the encroachments became insistent on violating the law by addressing issues that undermined the homeland's stability and higher interests.

Al-Mu'ashshir appealed to the owners of the weekly newspapers to safeguard the gains the press has achieved by acting responsibly in order to push journalism toward further freedom and responsibility.

During the discussions, some publishers of weekly papers agreed with this government move, which aims to promote the level of journalist performance and keep the homeland away from seditions which will harm everyone. They added that the anyone who pursues the fourth estate should show responsibility toward his homeland, toward his readers, and toward the noble mission of journalism by seeking the truth and placing the homeland's higher interest and the supremacy of law above other considerations.

Lebanon: Hizballah Reaches Pacts With Israel on POW Exchange

NC2007111696 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1030 GMT 20 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Hizballah Secretary General Shaykh Hasan Nasrallah has stated that an agreement has been reached with Israel through German mediation efforts. Under this agreement, the Resistance POW's detained by the Israeli forces will be released and the bodies of Resistance martyrs will be handed over in return for Hizballah handing over to Israel the bodies of two Israeli soldiers.

Nasrallah said that this agreement will be implemented tomorrow, and noted that the mediation efforts made by Germany for this exchange were backed by Syria and Iran. He pointed out that Israel will release a specific number of detainees from the al-Khiyam detention camp and that preference will be given to women, sick people, and those who have been held for a long time.

According to sources of Antoine Lahd [South Lebanese Army commander] in the occupied border strip, preparations are under way to release the detainees from al-Khiyam detention camp tomorrow.

AFP reported that a meeting will be held at the defense ministry today among Lebanese officials, the German delegation participating in the negotiations, and Hizballah representatives to agree on the final formula for this exchange. It said that Hizballah Secretary General Nasrallah has been holding talks with Syrian officials in Damascus since yesterday evening.

Lebanon: Released SLA Prisoners Refuse To Return to Security Zone

NC2107163596 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1615 GMT 21 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The bodies swap began at the Kafr Tibnit crossing this evening after it was obstructed at midday because of the South Lebanese Army [SLA] prisoners' refusal to return to the occupied security zone. Lebanon received 123 bodies while Israel received the remains of two Israeli soldiers. Hizballah released 17 SLA prisoners.

Lebanon: Bodies of Two Israeli Soldiers Arrive in Israel From Lebanon

NC2107112196 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0915 GMT 21 July 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A German Hercules military plane carrying the bodies of two Israeli soldiers landed today in an Israeli military base close to Ben Gurion airport in Tel Aviv, as reported by Israeli radio.

The bodies of the two Israeli soldiers were transported from Beirut to Israel via Cyprus. Earlier today, Hizballah handed over the bodies of the two soldiers and released 17 soldiers of the South Lebanese Army [SLA], who were transported in cars of the International Committee of the Red Cross [ICRC] to southern Lebanon. The ICRC undertook to transport the two Israeli soldiers bodies [Rahmamim al-Shaykh] and [Yusuf Fing] from Harat Hurayk to Beirut airport where they were received by Brend Schmidbauer, intelligence service coordinator in the German Chancellor's Office, in the presence of Lebanese Public Security Director General Raymond Raphael and Shaykh Wafiq Safa, a ranking Hizballah member.

At Beirut airport, Schmidbauer said that 130 bodies will be returned to Lebanon from Israel in exchange for the two Israeli bodies. He added that the exchange of prisoners will commence. He said that he views the swap as an indicator of good intentions and the negotiations will continue even if it proves to be difficult. Regarding the remaining prisoners and the Israeli pilot Ron Arad, Schmidbauer said that negotiations will continue for their release.

Raymond Raphael said: We received this file three months ago from the German Government and we made contacts with all the parties concerned. He added: The negotiations resulted in this positive outcome.

Shaykh Safa said that what was achieved is the first step toward the final closure of this file and the freeing of all the prisoners held in al-Khiyam prison and other Israeli prisons in the occupied territories, primarily Shaykh 'Abd-al-Karim 'Ubayd and Haj Abu-'Ali al-Dirani.

A source close to the Israeli Army said that Israel has started the hand over of dozens of resistance fighters' bodies.

Lebanon: German Plane Leaves Beirut With Israeli Soldiers' Remains

NC2107073296 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0700 GMT 21 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY [NNA] correspondent at Beirut airport has just reported that the German plane, which carries the remains of two Israeli soldiers, has left Beirut for Tel Aviv. The NNA correspondent said that German minister Schmidbauer left on board the same plane.

Prior to his departure, the German minister signed a document for the representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross stipulating that he has received the remains of the two Israeli soldiers. [passage omitted]

Lebanon: Hizballah Chief Comments on POW-Body Exchange

NC2207124396 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1030 GMT 22 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Hizballah Secretary General Sayyid Hasan Nasrallah told a news conference today that the POW issue is not new; it took several years of effort to reach agreement on the release of prisoners and handing over the remains of dead soldiers.

Nasrallah said the exchange of bodies and POW's has no connection with any regional development.

He said: Had it not been for the bodies of the two Israeli soldiers in our custody, there would have been no exchange. The issue was delayed until we received the best possible offer.

In answer to a question, Nasrallah said that Israel's current announcements about withdrawing from the south would not have been made if it had not been for resistance actions. He said that the completion of the exchange will have a positive impact on Lebanon's domestic situation but that it has no connection at all with the upcoming parliamentary elections.

He declared: Our aim has been to free the POW's regardless of any other considerations.

Sayyid Nasrallah explained that the United Nations and other international organizations contributed to the exchange operation, remarking: Germany succeeded in its mediation efforts because of its special friendship with Iran, Syria, and all the other parties. Nasrallah denied that Hizballah is holding any other Israeli or Lahd forces [South Lebanese Army] prisoner or that it has any information about the Israeli airman Ron Arad. He disclosed that the released 45 prisoners are part of a total of 112 detainees held at al-Khiyam prison and that they belong to the Amal Movement, the Believers Resistance, and Hizballah. He reported that Hizballah has so far lost 150 martyrs, and there are 84 others whose fate is unknown.

[Begin recording] [Correspondent] Why was it that Germany was the one that handled the negotiations between you and Israel? Another question: What was the United Nations' role in this matter? Why was there no UN mediator? What about the role of Iran?

[Nasrallah] In 1991, during the term of the former Secretary General Perez de Cuellar, the United Nations made efforts on this issue. Recently the international organizations reached a deadlock in their mediation efforts. I said a short time ago that we had reached a deadlock. Before the German mediation began, we were working through the international organizations, but reached a deadlock. Then the German intermediary came on the scene. I believe that because of his special friendship with Iran and Syria and at the same time because of his relations with Israel, he was better able than others to get a reasonable and acceptable offer. He worked hard on the issue. I do not know if any other countries concerned with the issue did anything about it. It is clear, however, that this German tried hard and used his friendly relations with all the parties to achieve this result. [end recording]

Lebanon: Syrian Vice President Says No New Israeli Signals on Negotiations

NC2107165396 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1530 GMT 21 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] President Ilyas al-Hirawi has renewed his call to all the Lebanese to take part in the parliamentary elections. Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam hoped that the Lebanese elections will take place in an atmosphere of democratic competition. He noted that Syria hopes that everybody will take part in these elections, adding that the final word rests with the Lebanese people.

President al-Hirawi and Syrian Vice President Khaddam made these remarks following their meeting at President al-Hirawi's home in Zahlah today. [passage omitted]

The discussion touched on the regional situation in light of the ongoing activity. Khaddam noted that thus far Damascus has not received any signal about the resumption of the negotiations. He expressed his dissatisfaction at Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's remarks in Washington. [passage omitted]

Before leaving Zahlah, Khaddam answered reporters' questions. He said:

[Begin recording] [Khaddam] Every year we come to Zahlah to congratulate President al-Hirawi on Saint Ilyas day. On this occasion, we exchanged views on all issues of mutual interest, particularly the situation in the region in light of the ongoing activity. We came up with the same conclusions that were inferred by the summit between President al-Asad and his excellency the [Lebanese] president.

[Unidentified correspondent] Do you expect some results regarding the peace process from Ross' trip to the region?

[Khaddam] If Ross has new things to say that we have not heard during Netanyahu's visit to Washington, we can judge the matter in light of these things. But if what he is going to bring is what we heard during Netanyahu's visit to Washington, then one cannot be optimistic.

[Correspondent] There are fast-breaking developments in the region, beginning with the [cease-fire] Monitoring Committee, the exchange of fighters' remains today, the sudden moderation in Netanyahu's tone, and the Lebanese-Syrian summit. Do you believe that these developments will lead to the resumption of the peace negotiations for instance?

[Khaddam] The question of the exchange of bodies and remains and the question of the Monitoring Committee do not reflect the real situation in the region. There are parties with certain views and circumstances. These parties have reached an agreement to swap POW's on one hand. On the other hand, it is in the interest of all parties to set up the Monitoring Committee so that it can begin its activity. However, this does not reflect a serious change in the Israeli policy in the region.

[Correspondent] Have you received certain signals about a change in the Israeli attitude regarding the activation of the negotiations on the Syrian track?

[Khaddam] Thus far we have not received any signals. All that we have is Netanyahu's discussion in Washington, which is not a cause for satisfaction. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Lebanon: Khaddam Answers Reporters' Questions in Zahlah, Departs

JN2107204596 Damascus Syrian Arab Television Network in Arabic 1730 GMT 21 Jul 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam and General Hikmat al-Shihabi, chief of staff of the Army and Armed Forces, arrived at the home of Lebanese President Ilyas al-Hirawi in Zahlah at 1300 today. [passage omitted]

Following the meeting, Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam answered journalists' questions, saying: We have come to the city of Zahlah, as usual, to congratulate Lebanese President Ilyas al-Hirawi on Saint Ilyas. On this occasion, we exchanged views on all issues of mutual interest, particularly the situation in the region in light of the ongoing activity. We came up with the same conclusions that were inferred by the summit between President Hafiz al-Asad and Lebanese President Ilyas al-Hirawi.

Regarding U.S. Coordinator Dennis Ross' tour of the region, and whether he expects a relaxation in the peace process, Khaddam said: If Ross has anything new to say that we did not hear during Binyamin Netanyahu's visit to Washington, we can judge the matter in light of these things. But, if what he is going to bring is what we heard during Netanyahu's visit to Washington, then one cannot be optimistic.

About developments in the region, the sudden moderation in Netanyahu's tone, the Syrian-Lebanese summit, and the exchange of the fighters' remains, and whether these developments will lead to something specific regarding the peace negotiations, the vice president said: The question of the exchange of bodies and remains and the question of the Monitoring Committee do not reflect the real situation in the region. There are parties with certain views and circumstances. These parties have reached an agreement to swap POW's on the one hand. On the other hand, it is in the interest of all parties to set up the Monitoring Committee so that it can begin its work. However, this does not reflect a serious change in the Israeli policy toward the situation in the region.

Khaddam was asked whether Syria has received signals about a change in the [Israeli] stand toward negotiations on the Syrian-Israeli track, he said: We have not received any signals regarding negotiations on the Syrian track. All that we have, as well as Netanyahu's discussion in Washington, do not call for satisfaction.

Regarding the elections which will be held in Lebanon, the vice president said: We hope the elections will take place in an atmosphere of democratic competition. We stress that Syria hopes that everybody will take part in the elections. The final word rests with the Lebanese people. We will certainly congratulate whoever will be elected by the Lebanese people.

Asked about the United States' views on the Monitoring Committee's role, Syria's opinion about this, and how he assesses Syria's current relations with the United States, Khaddam said: The 26 April agreement is clear to all sides. This is purely a security committee which has nothing to do with the main political issue. It does not reflect a new Israeli stand as long as the Israeli Government rejects the resolutions of the international legitimacy and all the bases of the peace process. When a change takes place in the Israeli stand, then we can say that this change is positive or negative. However, the minor signs regarding the formation of the Monitoring Committee do not reflect anything.

On Syria's relations with the United States at present, the vice president said: Nothing has changed in them.

Regarding information about a possible partial Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon, Khaddam said: When Israel withdraws unconditionally from southern Lebanon in implementation of Resolution 425, then every Arab citizen will welcome this.

Concerning the Lebanese opposition's stand toward the elections, the vice president said: This is a positive phenomenon. This proves that many Lebanese have begun to realize that their country's affairs necessitate participation in the constitutional frameworks and institutions, and that working outside the constitutional frameworks and institutions cannot bring anything positive to the country.

Regarding the opposition's concern about the elections, the vice president said: The question of concern is linked to the components of one's character. The proof is that these concerns do not have objective bases. This great nomination for the elections shows that there are no concerns. If some people have concerns, then they should search for a means to remove these concerns in a way which serves the country's interests.

Khaddam said: The Lebanese people are the ones who decide who they want and how the election results will be. No one, whether inside or outside Lebanon, can act on behalf of the Lebanese people, and presume in advance who will be elected by them, whether the loyalists or oppositionists accept this or not. The final word rests with the Lebanese people.

Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam and General Hikmat al-Shihabi, chief of staff of the Army and Armed Forces, returned to Damascus today following a short visit to the Lebanese city of Zahlah.

Lebanon: Buwayz Discusses Monitoring Committee, Israeli Withdrawal

NC2207102696 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0430 GMT 22 July 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz has praised Germany's role in the prisoner and bodies swap, describing it as humanitarian. Buwayz said that the monitoring committee may be effective and practical if calm is observed in the area. He added that the committee cannot be a substitute for the peace process, because it is a security-technical committee and is concerned with the situation on the ground.

Regarding the withdrawal operations about which Israel is talking, Buwayz had the following to say:

[Begin Buwayz recording] We have to be specific when talking about something. We have to be clear when talking about withdrawals and define that kind of withdrawal. If the talk is about a comprehensive withdrawal behind the internationally recognized borders, then the Lebanese state will welcome this withdrawal and will take it upon itself to deploy the Army and take all the measures that will enable it to exercise its sovereignty on all its territories. But unfortunately, I do not expect a withdrawal of this kind and do not believe that what is being said regarding withdrawals has any connection with this kind of withdrawal.

Perhaps what is being said may involve the possibility of some tactical withdrawals, some security and field withdrawals as a result of the successive attacks on the Israeli Army. In security and military terms, there are some areas that are difficult to defend; it is difficult to protect an army deployed in these areas, such as some valleys and hilltops. Therefore, the withdrawal about which remarks are being made is probably more of a redeployment than a withdrawal.

As for the Lebanese state, we do not believe that this withdrawal is effective or beneficial, because it will only be applied in some specific pockets and will not allow the Lebanese Army to deploy effectively. Consequently, this deployment is of no concern to us. We have discussed the possibility of taking some measures that might have negative repercussions on this kind of withdrawal if it goes into effect. [end recording]

Lebanon: Buwayz Reiterates 'Interconnected' Lebanese-Syrian Tracks

JN1907171696 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1515 GMT 19 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Beirut—Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz has reiterated the cohesion between the Lebanese and Syrian tracks in the Middle East peace process. Buwayz said the two tracks are interconnected and cannot be separated.

In an interview with the newspaper AL-LIWA' published today, Buwayz said that Lebanon entered the peace process under two slogans: the first, implementing Resolution 425 stipulating Israel's unconditional withdrawal from Lebanon, and the second implementing Resolutions 242 and 338. He said: Under these slogans, we are in solidarity with Syria and will not enter into any political or economic agreement with Israel without Syria.

Buwayz said he does not think that there will be complete Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon, but expected a partial and distractive [ihraji] withdrawal from certain areas in the south to reduce attacks on the Israeli army. He said that Lebanon has taken appropriate measures for this distractive withdrawal, affirming that such possible withdrawals are tactics used by the Israeli army to put its forces in order and avoid resistance attacks.

Lebanon: Buwayz Sees 'Partial' Israeli Withdrawal as 'Useless'

MM2207102296 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 20 Jul 96 p 5

[Unattributed report: "Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz Tells AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT: Partial Israeli Withdrawal Is Booby-Trapped and Aimed at Driving a Wedge Between Lebanon and the Resistance"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Beirut, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — In response to Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhaq Mordekhay's announcement the day before yesterday that he will soon put to the Israeli Government the issue of the Israeli Army's withdrawal from one part of south Lebanon only, Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT yesterday: "What Lebanon is interested in is Israel's total withdrawal from the occupied Lebanese territories and the implementation of Security Council Resolution 425."

Buwayz explained that "Lebanon has received no official notification in this context from either the U.S., French, or any other international side, and talk about this withdrawal has emerged only in the media."

Buwayz stressed that "Lebanon has taken all military and other precautions to deal with any unexpected withdrawal." He pointed out that "partial Israeli withdrawal is useless, and we can only consider it booby-trapped and provocative, aimed at driving a wedge between us and the resistance."

Buwayz said that "the Lebanese Government is aware of the implications of such withdrawal, by which Israel intends to harm Lebanon. Hence the Lebanese Government's readiness and efforts to deal with its negative outcome."

Lebanon: Hizballah Deputy Says Resistance To Continue

NC2107182696 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1730 GMT 21 Jul 96

[Interview with Lebanese Hizballah Deputy Shaykh Khudr Tulays by 'Isam Hasan; place and date not given—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Hasan] Some people are asking what cards does Hizballah have to bargain with for the release of other prisoners, such as Shaykh 'Ubayd and other mujahidin, held by the Zionist entity?

[Tulays] The continued qualitative resistance operations against the Zionist entity. With God's help, we hope that this resistance will succeed in delivering qualitative blows to the Zionist enemy and in having pressure cards so that we can liberate these prisoners. Of course, we have many means and the resources of the resistance are vast. We are optimistic and we hope to be able to release these prisoners in the future, hopefully in the near future.

[Hasan] In his news conference, [Israeli Prime Minister] Netanyahu said we will be glad to see moderation on Hizballah's part after the exchange of bodies and prisoners and also a halt to the attacks on Israel. What is your comment on this statement?

[Tulays] It is clear that Netanyahu is dreaming and trying to make the Zionists live in a dream that the resistance has stopped and that Hizballah has ceased the battle against the occupier. This is just a dream. The negotiations that led to the exchange were just a normal measure taken during the battle. The exchange of prisoners is normal between warring parties during battles and on the battlefield. But if Netanyahu wants to interpret this as a sign that the resistance will stop, I believe it is just a dream. The resistance will continue until all the territories are liberated.

Lebanon: Israelis, 'Resistance' Exchange Gunfire in South

NC2107053296 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0430 GMT 21 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The occupation forces shelled the hills of Jabal al-Dahr, the periphery of Libbaya, and the Mimis area in the central sector of the south with more than 40 155-mm artillery shells and tank fire at 0500 today. Members of the puppet militia [South Lebanese Army] raked the same areas with heavy and light machine-gun fire from their forward positions in Zummarayya.

The Islamic Resistance retaliated by shelling the militia's position in Zummarayya with rockets and mortar fire. Several shells fell inside the position and along its periphery. The losses suffered by the agents of the puppet militia are not yet known. Last night the Israeli occupation forces bombarded the Iqlim al- Tuffah hills, especially Jabal al-Rafi', al-Wadi al-Akhdar, and the outskirts of Sujud and al-Rayhan.

Lebanon: Radio Reports Israeli Shelling, Overflights

NC2207115396 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1030 GMT 22 July 96

[FBIS Translated Text] At 1000 [0700 GMT] today Israeli warplanes flew low altitude reconnaissance flights over the central sector villages. Israeli heavy artillery positioned in Tallat al-'Abbad bombarded the town of Mallulah, which is located between the towns of al-Tiri and Haddathah. Elsewhere the Bayt Yahun crossing was reopened to cars after it was closed during the body-swap operation on 21 July.

Syria: Press on Europe's Peace Role, 'Losing Wager' on Netanyahu

JN2207064896 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0450 GMT 22 Jul 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In a commentary titled "Europe's Effective Role in Peace Process," AL-BA'TH emphasizes the intensive political efforts in the region to break the deadlock in the peace process that has been caused by Israel's rejection of the foundations and principles of this process.

AL-BA'TH says: It is noticeable that Europe in general, and France in particular, have for some time now been expressing concern about the halt in the peace process. France stressed the importance of the land-for-peace principle. Europe knows the consequences of any halt to this process for our region, Europe, and the rest of the world.

AL-BA'TH adds: Syria thinks that it is necessary to have an active European role in the peace process. This position stems from Syria's conviction that the European nations are closer to the region in all respects and better able to understand its situation, especially the Arab-Israeli conflict. In addition, no one should forget the many common aspects shared by Arab and European countries.

AL-BA'TH says: We, as Arabs, do not want Europe and others simply to side with us. We want them to side with international legitimacy and its resolutions to achieve a just and comprehensive peace so it will be possible to provide security and stability for everybody in the region.

AL-BA'TH asserts that the peace process, which began in Madrid in accordance with the U.S. initiative and whose principles were accepted by the parties involved in the conflict, is now threatened with collapse because of the Israeli position. The Israeli Government has washed its hands of the terms of reference of the peace process and has started making threats and preparing itself for aggression and for occupying more Arab land. If anything, this shows that the Netanyahu government is not concerned with the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace, but wants to impose a fait accompli policy.

AL-BA'TH concludes: Based on this, it is the duty of all nations, especially European countries — for many reasons, primarily their vital interests in the our region — to play a more active role to establish justice in this region, which is one of the most sensitive regions in the world. If the current French role continues, it will be very effective in creating the proper groundwork for resuming the peace process.

In its editorial today, headlined "A Losing Bet," TISHRIN says: It has been more than a month since Netanyahu assumed power in Israel. Each day confirms that the Likud leader's intransigent positions during his election campaign have become the pillar of Israel's current policy. The wager on a peaceful shift in Israel, without Arab and international pressure, is just an unfounded illusion.

TISHRIN notes that the coalition partners in the current Israeli Government prevent any decision that might enhance the prospects for peace in the region. The parties that make up the government vie with one another to reject withdrawal from the Golan and the West Bank. These parties are unanimous on the need to provide human, geographic, and military resources to establish the Israel described in the Torah. In addition, the ruling military establishment, which is the ultimate decision-maker in Israel, prevents any government, regardless of its political persuasion, from abandoning the political platform of Zionism, which is based on the seizure of land between the Nile and the Euphrates.

TISHRIN adds: The other factor that prevents the current government from embracing peace is the personality of its leader. The ruling military-security establishment in Israel is the one that brought Netanyahu after it ascertained that his thinking, conduct, and relations are completely consistent with its ambitions. Netanyahu is fully imbued with Zionist ideology. He has expressed this in his books, in which he reviewed all the requirements for a just and comprehensive peace in the region. Netanyahu is very skilled in misleading and deceiving public opinion and has intimate relations with the most extremist political factions in the United States. Netanyahu also holds deep-seated grudges against Arabs and Muslims.

TISHRIN continues: We should not forget that, during the recent elections in Israel, Netanyahu received a public mandate to destroy the peace process and provide all the requirements for the aggressive Zionist plan.

TISHRIN concludes: The Israeli Government is not one of peace. It has come to destroy the foundations of peace and provide the appropriate circumstances for complete Zionist hegemony over the Arab world. Therefore, a bet on the possibility of making this government embrace a just settlement is a losing one that will create confusion within the Arab ranks and destroy the achievements of the recent Arab summit in Cairo. The only way for the Arabs to restore their rights is to enhance solidarity, close the gaps in the Arab wall that have been created by Zionism, and solidify the Arab position.

Syria: Netanyahu's Policy Called 'Nightmare' for Peace

JN2007165196 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1145 GMT 20 Jul 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Developments have shown that the policy adopted by Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu is a real nightmare for the peace process. It not only threatens to completely freeze this process; it also risks pushing the region toward a new phase of tension and raising the chances for an explosion, the repercussions of which will adversely affect security and stability in the region and in the world.

Netanyahu's extremist program is no longer an election propaganda after it was transformed into a government policy statement. The Israeli government has embarked on attempts to subjugate the world to extremist proposals that can neither realize peace nor lead to it. It has become well-known that the new Israeli Government's political platform reverts the peace process back to square one. It does so, not only by destroying the bases of peace and its terms of reference and ignoring facts, but also by attempting to impose impossible terms, which — if added to Netanyahu's famous no's — will render the resumption of the peace process an impossibility.

What is extremely strange is that Israel, which raised the slogans of rejecting preconditions, rushed to set a number of conditions that will definitely wipe out all hope of activating the peace process. Netanyahu has revealed the true nature of his positions, even those that pertain to claims of his concern about security, when he disclosed his condition of a halt to resistance before negotiations can begin and ordered the Palestinians to close their offices in Jerusalem, which has had its share of Netanyahu's no's. He insists on Judaizing this city and maintains that it is not subject to negotiations.

As if all these indicators of Netanyahu's antipeace intentions were not enough, the new Israeli Government proposed a scheme to resume the settlement activities in such an intensive manner that it undermines the peace process and eliminates any chance for stability. Such declared schemes, which hope to increase the number of settlers in the West Bank alone to half a million settlers, assert that the Israeli Government has no appetite except for devouring more Arab lands, making solutions hard to attain, and entrenching a de facto policy based on an ideology that revives the Torah terminology and mobilizes religious extremists to establish Greater Israel. This will inevitably reflect negatively on the region and the world.

The world, which asserted through its various economic and political blocs and through the superpowers — both individually and collectively — that it supports a just and comprehensive peace that is based on Security Council resolutions and the land-for-peace principle, is now called upon more than ever to effectively pressure Israel to comply with the bases of peace and the Madrid conference as terms of reference.

What is very strange is that Israel, merely because it has a new prime minister, seeks to change the bases of peace, strike at the terms of reference that were approved by the international legitimacy, and make the entire world conform to its concepts, which undermine peace and cause tension. Such Israeli arrogance, which plays the tune of power and the melody of preponderance, can only turn the tables of peace. Therefore, it must inevitably be confronted by an Arab action that translates into practice the Arab summit's comprehensive resolutions that assert the Arabs' adherence to peace as a strategic option that returns land and rights to their owners and guarantees security and stability for all.

Syria, which was the first to alert others and move to confront the dangers of the Israeli change, continues to exert intensive efforts to clear the Arab atmosphere and defuse tension and differences with geographically neighboring states so that it will eventually be possible to formulate a practical strategy to confront the sweeping Israeli danger that threatens the entire region.

No doubt, hardening the unified Arab position toward the bases of peace and its terms of reference, and adhering to the Arab rights and international legitimacy decisions will place Israel in a position in which it would be defying the entire world, including the United States, which is aware of the dangers of sliding into the Israeli proposals that spell disaster for peace.

When the Arabs build solidarity and arrive at a unified position, they will then be capable of addressing the entire world from a position of strength that is in line with international legitimacy and the will of the international community in establishing just and comprehensive peace — peace that can only be built on the termination of occupation; returning all of the Golan, southern Lebanon, and all the occupied Arab lands, including Jerusalem; preserving the dignity of the Arabs; and guaranteeing the future of the nation. This will generate an atmosphere of stability and security for all on a fair and comprehensive basis.

Syria: Damascus Condemns Israeli Bid To Impose 'Torah Logic'

JN2107174696 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1140 GMT 21 Jul 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: Perhaps one of the most serious things proposed by the political program of the Israeli Government under Binyamin Netanyahu is the Torah-based claim that the occupied territories cannot be returned to the Arabs, because they are owned by Israel and are part of Greater Israel, and that Israel would be giving up much of the land that falls between the Torah borders stretching from the Nile to the Euphrates. The Israeli rejection of the land-for-peace principle is built on this serious claim, which is founded on the Torah-based political discourse. Hence, its refusal to withdraw from the Golan, southern Lebanon, and the occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem, is based on this claim. This is a problem in itself in view of the Israeli hardline stand that emanates from the one adopted by the extremist religious current in Israel, which looks down on the Arabs and all peoples of the world based on racial discrimination. This stand forms the basis of a more serious stand that Israel does not want a just and comprehensive peace under the pretext that peace does not achieve security, because according to Israel, power alone can achieve security for it and the occupation of territories is what protects Israel. Meanwhile, peace according to Israel is nothing more than a means to subdue the Arabs and exercise hegemony over them. All Israel wants from peace is to gain control over the Arabs' resources, prestige, decisionmaking, and future. Under this standard, the road to peace becomes arduous if not impossible in accordance with the facts and requirements of the international community and international legitimacy as represented in UN Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, and 425 and the land-for-peace principle. Under this standard too, cosmetic political measures cannot hide the real meanings of the Israelis' stands on the peace process and their going back on the Madrid terms of reference.

Israel's rejection of a just and comprehensive peace is clear. Netanyahu's statements before, during, and after his visit to Washington also suffer no interpretation. They seek to evade commitments, reject international legitimacy, and ignore even the U.S. stand, efforts, and commitment toward realizing a just and comprehensive peace based on the land-for-peace principle, which is the basis of the U.S. initiative itself.

It is strange that Israel under Netanyahu's government is trying to impose its Torah logic on the entire world and to have the Arabs, the United States, and the entire world adapt to this logic, which everyone near and far knows is a turn against peace. A just and comprehensive peace is a unanimous international desire to implement and respect international legitimacy resolutions, which guarantee everyone's rights and security.

Syria: 'Some Differences' With Egypt Reported

JN2107123396 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1100 GMT 21 Jul 96

[Report by Thana' al-Imam in Damascus]

[FBIS Translated Text] Several topics will be discussed during Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad's talks with Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa, [who arrived in Damascus today]. The faltering peace process will top the agenda, especially after the emergence of some differences in the two sides' viewpoints.

In his assessment of the results of his talks with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, President Mubarak expected negotiations to resume shortly. However, Damascus emphasized through its official press yesterday that negotiations will not resume unless they are based on the principles of the peace process. It indicated that Netanyahu's statements in Cairo did not reflect any change in his stand. Moreover, the Egyptian president said after visiting Ankara that the Turkish-Israeli military agreement does not pose a threat to neighboring states, while Damascus views it in a completely different manner. Official Syrian sources told Radio Monte Carlo that Syrian-Egyptian rapport is stronger than any difference and that the two sides, in addition to Saudi Arabia, constitute the main pillar of the current Arab position.

Egyptian diplomatic sources said the two sides may discuss the subject of reconciliation with Iran, although it is premature to make a decision in this regard before President Mubarak's visit to Washington. The Syrian sources said the issue is not one of mediation between Egypt and Iran, but an attempt to bring the views of the two sides closer in a bid to form an Arab and Islamic front to confront a common adversary.

Syria: Egypt's Musa Conveys Mubarak Message to al-Asad, Departs

JN2107164896 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1515 GMT 21 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Hafiz al-Asad received Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa at the Presidential Palace in Latakia at 1145 today.

The meeting was attended by Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar'; Nabil Fahmi, political adviser to the Egyptian foreign minister; and Mahmud Shukri, Egyptian ambassador in Damascus.

'Amr Musa conveyed to the president a message from Egyptian President Muhammad Husni Mubarak. He also briefed the president on the talks President Mubarak held recently with Israel's Prime Minister and the contacts Egypt made in the past few days with parties concerned with the peace process in the region.

Discussion during the meeting dealt with the situation and developments in the region and the contacts Syria and Egypt are making with fraternal Arab countries and other parties interested in the peace process in the region.

'Amr Musa arrived at Martyr Basil al-Asad Airport in Humaymim, Latakia this morning. He was received and seen off at the airport by Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar'.

Syria: Radio Commentary Discusses Conditions To Resume Peace Talks

JN1907125096 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 19 Jul 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] U.S. peace coordinator Dennis Ross will arrive in the region in the next few days on a new mission to explore stands and the possibilities of resuming the halted peace process. The peace talks stopped following the announcement of early Israeli elections. The Likud's victory in these elections and Netanyahu's extremist stands in Israel and the United States further complicated and exploded matters.

The new Israeli prime minister rejected the principles of the peace process, particularly land for peace; boasted openly that he will never forget the Golan; considered the West Bank and the Gaza Strip part of Israel's biblical land; announced his refusal to withdraw from occupied Arab Jerusalem; and pledged to expand settlements on a large scale throughout occupied Arab territory. Thus, he left no glimpse of hope for the peace process. His extremist and aggressive stands created a general concern not only in the region but throughout the world, particularly in Europe and the United States.

The Arabs met in a summit and held Israel responsible for any retreat in the peace process, reiterating their adherence to the bases of the peace process in accordance with the Madrid principles. In addition, the Europeans expressed a strong concern in the Florence summit when they called on Israel to abide by the bases of peace and not to depart from the Madrid framework. The Group of 7 and Russia expressed a similar stand in Lyons. For its part, the United States, the sponsor of the peace process, asserted its adherence to the agreed-upon bases, particularly the land-for-peace principle.

Yesterday, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher announced that Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 are the bases of the peace process. Resolution 242, which was reiterated in Resolution 338, stipulates the inadmissibility of occupying others' land by force and calls on Israel to withdraw to the 4 June 1967 border. In view of Arab and international reactions, which were firm in their adherence to the bases and components of the peace process, the Israeli prime minister tried to ease the sharpness of his statements without relinquishing their essence. Yesterday he announced his readiness to resume the Syrian-Israeli talks, noting at the same time that he has his own interpretation of the land-for-peace principle. He was pointing to his earlier statements about peace with security.

Netanyahu believes that the Golan, southern Lebanon, and the West Bank are necessary for Israel's security, thinking that Arabs have no choice but to relinquish them and to offer peace at the same time. This is what he terms as peace with security. This completely conflicts with the Security Council resolutions which do not allow the occupation of others' lands, with the essence of the U.S. initiative, and with the land-for-peace principle.

The Israeli prime minister is only deceiving himself in these deceptive statements. There is no security for Israel outside the framework of peace; and the just and comprehensive peace, which returns rights to their owners, is the only guarantee of security and stability in the region.

In its talks with the former Israeli Government, Syria showed its readiness to reach even [muta'adil] and equitable [mutakafi'] security arrangements which will reinforce peace. However, it explained to everyone that peace should be accompanied by full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan, specifically to the 4 June 1967 border.

Syria is not interested in holding talks just for the sake of negotiating, as Netanyahu wishes. It negotiated proceeding from known principles, the international legitimacy resolutions, and the land-for-peace principle. The land-for-peace principle means all the land that was occupied in 1967, not part of it.

Syria will not hold any future negotiations if they are not based on the same principles and if they are not linked with Israel's pledge to implement the international legitimacy resolutions and to abide by the UN Charter and the principles of international law. In this stand, Syria enjoys the support of all Arabs and the international community.

Syria: Al-Asad's Hold on Power Considered Precarious

96ES0170A Istanbul NOKTA in Turkish 29 Jun 96 pp 30-32

[Report by Kivanc Galip Over: "Even Alawite Support Is Inadequate for Al-Asad"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Hafiz al-Asad built the Syrian regime on delicate balances among the centers of power in the country. So far, he has relied on the support of the Kalbiye Order to which he belongs. He was also able to keep himself in power by satisfying the demands of the country's Alawite minority. However, the economic deadlock which has begun to be felt has made al-Asad unable to meet the needs of the people and the army. As a result, Syria is faced with the prospect of cutting its military budget, approximately $1 billion in 1995, gradually every year.

Al-Asad's troubles do not end there. It seems that foreign problems that surfaced in recent years will cause much headache to the Syrian leader. After keeping alive the Hatay problem for many years, al-Asad has tried to squeeze Turkey into a corner by raising objections to GAP [Southeast Anatolia Project] and using the PKK [Workers Party of Kurdistan] and certain border clans as contractors against Ankara. Now al-Asad is in trouble, and this time the trouble he has caused himself is big. After acting "patiently" for years, Turkey seems to have taken a more resolute stance. The "irregular" military units al-Asad placed on the Turkish border do not appear to be more than a show of force.

No Name in Plan

After the dissolution of the USSR and the return of France to its "Mediterranean policy," Damascus found it hard to form any alliances with any powers. It has also failed to reap the rewards it hoped from the family relationship between Rif'at al-Asad and Saudi Prime Minister 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz. Formerly a stronghold of Arab nationalism together with Iraq, Damascus has also failed in its recent attempts, in conjunction with Baghdad, to revitalize the Arab nationalist movement which has been losing its influence in world affairs. Until recently, the common wisdom regarding negotiations on the Middle East was: "There can be no war without Egypt and no peace without Syria." Today, after the recent developments in the region, foreign powers insisting on peace in the region view the word "Syria" in that statement with suspicion.

The "Hijaz Plan," attributed to the King Husayn of Jordan, is another indication of this trend. Husayn claims that he is the legitimate king of Jordan and the Hijaz area of Iraq. But Hijaz is not only in Iraq. It is also the name of a geographic area in Syria. The dissolution of Iraq in accordance with this plan also means that its southern regions will come under Kuwaiti and Iranian control and that northern Iraq will probably come under Turkey's authority. If the plan becomes reality, Syria will become the last, though weakened, stronghold of a dysfunctional Arab nationalism.

Al-Asad's Brothers and PKK

While opposing this plan, Syria also faces the pressures of the majority masses it has repressed and excluded from political participation since the establishment of the country. The bombs that exploded and sabotage incidents that occurred in quick succession near 'Afrin, Raju, and Aleppo in October 1995 are still on the world's political agenda. The events that occurred in northern Syria and near Latakia have been particularly noteworthy. Explosions in Latakia, Syria's gateway to the Mediterranean, are seen as the most significant indication that al-Asad does not control all of Syria. Another important detail is that the target of these acts was Jamil al-Asad, Hafiz al-Asad's brother, and figures known for their close ties to Jamil. Jamil al-Asad is also a key figure in Damascus's relations with the PKK. Information from sources in Syria suggests that the PKK is in direct contact with Jamil and Rif'at al-Asad and that the two brothers maintain close, one-on-one ties with [PKK leader] Abdullah Ocalan. Another known and concealed fact is that the two brothers utilize the PKK in their political machinations and smuggling activities.

PKK members constitute a substantial portion of the people targeted by bombing and sabotage acts. With a Kurdish population of 700,000, Syria has also experienced a domestic migration movement in its districts of A'zaz, Raju, Jawban Bayk, and 'Afrin because of pressure from the PKK. In the last elections, the PKK scared off many candidates through pressure and tried to replace them with its own candidates. During the same period, the PKK tried to extort taxes from Kurdish villages with the sanction of Jamil al-Asad. Later, confronted with the wrath of the Syrian public, the PKK scaled down these activities, and the Damascus regime had to "take in" [imprison] more than 50 PKK members temporarily just for show. Even so, the PKK continued its business with Rif'at and Jamil al-Asad; while working as the personal army of the al-Asad brothers, the PKK continued to run its smuggling and other activities from the Syrian-controlled Al-Biqa' Valley of Lebanon.

Al-Asad's Turkmen Card

A communique that appeared in Syria's Kurdish regions last April suggested that al-Asad stands at a difficult turning point. The communique, entitled "Iraq yesterday, Turkey today, Syria tomorrow," charged that Hafiz al-Asad and the PKK are communists and infidels. Repression intensified after the communique, bringing many arrests with it. A car bomb that went off in Latakia in March performed the catalytic function it was meant to, and Syria entered the most critical days of perhaps its entire history. Those arrested included nearly 650 Turkmens. Syrian Turkmens have not organized in the past or at present. These arrests of Turkmens, who live under repressive conditions, are seen as a public demonstration of Hafiz al-Asad's steadfastness. However, bombing acts have continued despite the arrests. The arrests have also given al-Asad a new trump card in the problems he has with Turkey.

Al-Asad reportedly lives in luxury and has substantial balances in Swiss bank accounts. Today he faces troubles that arise from basing his and his family's power on international terrorism and narcotics trafficking. Meanwhile, the secret battle for power between his two brothers Rif'at and Jamil prevents him from leaving the country even on the most important occasions. Furthermore, the death or removal from office of al-Asad, who has worsening health problems, only means many years of fraternal wars for the Syrian people.

Basil's Mysterious Death

Al-Asad also faces difficulty in finding a successor. His younger son, Majid, was treated for drug addiction in Germany for a while. His other son, Baasar, is an ophthalmologist and is not interested in politics. Another son, Basil, whom al-Asad reared as Syria's future president his entire life, died in an "unfortunate traffic accident" on the road to the airport in January 1994. Mystery continues to surround the death of Basil. Until the death of Basil, al-Asad fought successfully against illegal activities in Latakia, a center of smuggling, using his republican guards.

Although respected among the people as an honest statesman, Basil was heavily criticized by circles close to Hafiz al-Asad that had amassed large wealth from smuggling. Severe penalties imposed by Basil against persons engaged in illegal activities, occasionally without regard to position or name, attracted the wrath of many circles including senior officials in the country. Basil's death left Rif'at al-Asad as the chief contender for power.

Hafiz al-Asad's biggest rival in the family, Rif'at has been fighting for power since the 1980's. Sent into exile by Hafiz al-Asad because of his earlier activities and known for his ambitious personality, Rif'at has amassed considerable wealth from narcotics trafficking together with his sons. Jamil al-Asad visits Rif'at every time he goes overseas. They attend important meetings together. Hafiz al-Asad is known to be disturbed by these meetings. Another concern Hafiz al-Asad has with regard to Rif'at is that a substantial portion of the senior Alawite officers in the army support Rif'at.

Who Takes Latakia's Extortion Money

Hafiz al-Asad is convinced that the said officers are engaged in various conspiracies and plots and keeps them under constant surveillance. Meanwhile, the friendship between Rif'at and Ocalan goes so far as exchanging expensive gifts. Jamil al-Asad is also among the rivals Hafiz al-Asad fears most. Jamil's sons, Munzir and Fawwaz, are in charge of their father's smuggling and extortion activities. These individuals also run a considerable portion of the smuggling operations in Latakia. Earlier, Jamil tried to unite political groups outside the Ba'ath Party under a democratic umbrella, but Hafiz al-Asad strongly opposed it. Jamil believed that dissidents should be brought into the system, but Hafiz al-Asad thought that this was an indirect attempt by Jamil to gain power. Hafiz al-Asad was most probably right, because Jamil wanted participants in his coalition to have an armed force and its members to carry arms.

$3-Million Market

Jamil's trip to France to visit Rif'at immediately after Hafiz al- Asad rejected his idea was an important detail of the rivalry among the al-Asad brothers. The bloodshed in the al-Asad clan in Latakia in 1992 was another indication of the troubles to come. Hafiz al-Asad's nephews, Marwan Dib and Mahir Dib, together with their men engaged in an armed battle with Jamil al-Asad's sons, Fawwaz, Mundhir, Ahmad, and Harun. The reason for the fight was a form of market competition. The smuggling of cigarettes, arms, narcotics, electronic goods, and steel from Lebanon into Latakia also intensified the rivalry within the family. The Dib family reportedly cut prices set by Fawwaz and Mundhir. In response, Marwan Dib had a hand grenade thrown into Fawwaz's car, resulting in the deaths of three bodyguards. In another skirmish, Harun and nine bodyguards lost their lives. Ahmad and Mundhir were also wounded in that fight.

In 1995, following an operation by Lebanese and Syrian intelligence services, Yahya Shams, a Lebanese member of parliament and a large number of senior Lebanese government officials were arrested. In his testimony Shams mentioned the name Ghazi Kan'an in connection with narcotics. Kan'an is a brigadier general in the Syrian army and is the officer responsible for Lebanon in Al'Mukhabarat, Syria's intelligence service. Shams also mentioned Jamil al-Asad and his close friend 'Ali Hamid Jafar in his testimony. So far none of the persons mentioned in Shams' testimony have been prosecuted either in Syria or in Lebanon. It is estimated that the al-Asad family earns $3 billion from trafficking narcotics. Al-Asad's Syria is a decaying country caught in the throes of such dark and immoral disputes. Sectarianism, officially-sanctioned trafficking of narcotics and arms and a foreign policy based on blood and tears is undermining the foundations of the country. The delicate balance established by Hafiz al-Asad is rocked by clashing interests and the majority Sunnis who are not in government. Now seeing an alliance between Israel and Turkey, al-Asad has for the moment pinned his hopes on the Arab League.

Afghanistan

Afghanistan: President, Prime Minister Make New Appointments

LD2007194996 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 20 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The president of the Islamic State of Afghanistan has made the following appointment to the government, as proposed by the office of the prime minister:

1. Esteemed Qotboddin Helal, as the first deputy prime minister,
2. Esteemed Sekandar Qiyam, as the acting minister of agriculture,
3. Esteemed Engineer Abdol Salam Hashemi, as the acting minister of house and city construction.

Afghanistan: Spokesman Denies Military Support for Tajik Opposition

LD2107155696 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Pashto 1230 GMT 21 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Afghan presidential spokesman has announced that no party or person will be allowed to interfere in the internal affairs of Tajikistan. In an interview on Saturday [20 July], 'Abdol Aziz Murad said: The Afghan government wants to continue good neighborly relations with the people and government of Tajikistan and has always tried to resolve the country's problems through talks and peaceful means. He denied any military support to Tajikistan's Islamic movement and other parties opposed to the Tajik president, Emomali Rakhmonov. He expressed hope that the existing misunderstanding in Kabul-Dushanbe relations would be resolved through diplomatic means.

India

India: Delhi Firm on CTBT Proposal, Against U.S. 'Hooliganism'

BK2007074496 Delhi HINDUSTAN in Hindi 18 Jul 96 p 1

[Report by Aalok Mehta]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Government of India made it very clear to senior diplomats from twenty influential countries that India was not going to buckle under any pressure or change its stand at any cost on the CTBT [Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty] at the Geneva Conference, likely to restart from 29th July to finalize the treaty proposal. However, if countries like America and Britain would relent in their stubborn stand and agree to changes in the draft of the CTBT, then an unanimously approved draft of the proposal could be sent to the United Nations. This treaty proposal is scheduled to get final approval from the UN General Assembly in which many developing countries are expected to support India's stand. Now India has a bigger role to play than even that of Russia and China in tackling America hooliganism on the CTBT issue.

Even though India has a coalition government of the United Front, not only the Opposition but the entire country are unanimous in their decision that our country should not bow before any pressure exerted by the Western powers to force India to change its stand on the CTBT. There is consensus that, for security reasons, India must keep its nuclear option open. As a matter of fact, India is trying to use this Geneva Conference to sharpen its drive for total disarmament in the world. It also wants to expose the hypocrisy of those powerful countries who hide behind the facade of this treaty, wanting not only to keep their nuclear stockpiles intact and to augment their nuclear power by conducting nuclear tests every second or third year but also to prevent other smaller countries from enjoying this option by forcing them to sign the CTBT and losing their nuclear option forever. What is amazing is the impudence with which the American government, right from President Clinton to other senior American diplomats, is putting pressure on the Indian prime minister, Deve Gowda, and the Indian external affairs minister, Inder Kumar Gujral, to accept the proposal for the CTBT as it is. Not only are they doing that but they are also spreading confusion through shrewd diplomatic manoeuvres that "prudent" India would eventually sign this treaty.

The senior diplomats of the Indian External Affairs Ministry do clarify informally that India will not be leaving the CTBT negotiations as India does not want to adopt an escapist position on this delicate issue. Hence it is quite possible that, owing to India's serious objections to the draft of the proposal, the original draft, without any conclusive decision, may be sent to the UN General Assembly for further consideration. It is clear that at the Geneva Conference no decision is likely to be taken on the proposal through open voting. The final decision may be taken only in the UN General Assembly's coming session. In any case, India cannot be deprived of using its fundamental right to protect its security and sovereignty under any threat or temptation. Moreover, India's stand on the proposal is not without logic. India emphasizes that before this treaty is finalized the nuclear powers must declare their time bound program of liquidating their existing nuclear weapons.

Indian diplomats also want to dispel the wrong impression concerning India's stand. Many people ask: If India doesn't accept this draft why it is not producing an amended draft of the proposal suiting its requirements? India has done so repeatedly through its permanent representative, Mrs. Arundhati Ghosh and her associates. They did give suggestions to amend the draft. But the influential countries committed the initial blunder by haphazardly producing the draft proposal without consulting other members participating in the conference. In the existing draft proposal the nuclear countries have deliberately included provisions to cause trouble for countries like India. For example, on the mere suspicion of any such country starting to manufacture nuclear weapons all its secret documents could be subjected to international scrutiny. Not only this, there is also a provision to impose economic sanctions against countries opposing the existing form of the CTBT. But it presents no disarmament program for those countries equipped with nuclear weapons. In short, the nuclear countries may go on augmenting their nuclear stockpiles and this treaty places no checks on them. So this treaty proposal is clearly 'discriminatory' and the Indian protest against it must receive comprehensive support.

India: Report Claims U.S. Continues To 'Pressure' Nation on CTBT

BK2207125896 Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English 20 Jul 96 p 4

[Report by Seema Sirohi in Washington]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Clinton Administration is using a multi-pronged strategy to mount pressure on India to not block a nuclear test ban treaty, making the issue the first real test of the foreign minister Mr Inder Kumar Gujral's skill in crossing a major foreign policy hurdle.

While the US appears to have accepted the grim fact that India will not sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), it wants to ensure New Delhi will do nothing to hinder the passage of the treaty. Senior US officials say they are aware of the Indian position and objections, but they hope "eventually" India will sign the treaty.

The text of the treaty will be discussed again at the Conference on Disarmament on July 29 in Geneva before it is sent to the UN General Assembly in New York. US officials are afraid India might "kill" the treaty by reopening the text for discussion.

Therefore, the US is making every effort to ensure India's silence in Geneva later this month. Demarches are flying and pressure is being generated through India's friends and allies. If India stays quiet now the text would be open for signatures in September. New Delhi would then be required to sign an unacceptable treaty since its signature is imperative for the treaty to come into force.

The formulation which traps India in a corner was made at the insistence of the British, Russians and the Chinese.

India's refusal to sign the CTBT could affect relations with not just the US, but also with other important members of the international community. Mr Gujral can expect some tough talk at Jakarta when he meets the US secretary of state, Mr Warren Christopher, on Sunday [21 July] during the ministerial gathering of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

The US may be willing to offer some carrots and show the stick at the same time to induce India into signing the treaty. Experts here feel that New Delhi can extract some concessions from the US on bilateral issues during the Jakarta meeting in lieu of its commitment to sign the treaty down the line. The concessions can be in the shape of a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, or issues of bilateral concern such as technology transfer, one expert said.

India, however, made it clear today it would not succumb to pressure from any quarters at Jakarta and change its stand on the CTBT, adds our special correspondent in New Delhi.

Mr A.N. Ram, secretary of external relations in the ministry of external affairs, who along with the foreign secretary, Mr Salman Haidar, will attend the Asean meeting, said there would be no shift in India's stated position on the CTBT. "We are not going to change our stand just because we are in Jakarta," he said.

According to statements made yesterday by Ms Robin Raphel, assistant secretary of state for South Asia, it appears the US is resigned to India's position, but is leaving the door open for New Delhi to sign the treaty some time during the three years.

While US officials have asked the Russians to help convince New Delhi, they also recognise the reality of the political situation in India where all parties are united in their opposition to the CTBT. They feel that as long as India does not veto the treaty in Geneva, a dialogue can evolve to address India's concerns.

India: CTBT Makes India 'Perennially Inferior' Unless Veto Exercised

BK2007112296 Delhi BUSINESS STANDARD in English 20 Jul 96 p 7

[Article by Prem Shankar Jha: "Why India Must Veto the CTBT"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] From the recent statement of the foreign minister, I K Gujral in Parliament, it is beginning to appear that after all its brave words and trumpeting of principles, India is once again about to surrender meekly to the arm twisting tactics of the US and its G-7 allies. If Mr Gujral's statement is reported correctly, then, depending on the final shape of the CTBT [Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty] draft, India is likely to refuse to sign it but may not use her veto powers to prevent it from going to the UN for endorsement.

The reasons for taking this middle path are not difficult to understand. It does not want India to be isolated in the world community. It is afraid of having its official development assistance cut off It does not want to be cut off from the supply of arms and technology. It fears that a head-on confrontation with the G-7 could lead to all the three. New Delhi has no doubt been assured that none of this will happen, if India simply does not block the treaty from going to New York. Where this government is in danger of making a fool of itself and fatally injuring India's interests, is in believing these assurances.

The truth is, that the only difference that not blocking the treaty will make is to keep World Bank and Aid India consortium aid flowing to the country. This is aid that India no longer needs. Some much needed adjustments of its domestic policies — the elimination of the fiscal deficit to cut back the hectic growth of imports and a reduction of the bureaucratic red tape and rampant corruption that makes India such an unfriendly place for foreign investors-will balance India's external account, and bring in 10 times the investment that the Bank and its consortium can possibly supply, on much better terms. For the rest, not only will India continue to be denied access to the latest technologies in dual use areas, as it is being denied today, but the strictures that are already in place in many countries against the sale of most modern arms to India are bound to become stronger.

The reason for this is, the shape that the nuclear powers, particularly the US, the UK and France, have sought to give to the CTBT. The CTBT is not a test ban treaty. It is solely a treaty to ban nuclear explosions. Its rationale for wanting to do so is not environmental: had that been so it would have distinguished between atmospheric and Pacific island testing, which does immense harm, and underground testing in the middle of a desert or the core of a mountain, which does very little. The avowed purpose of the CTBT is to limit future competition for global pre-eminence to the five nuclear powers. This, according to the promoters of the treaty will make future competition for power more manageable and thus make the world a safer place. But its real effect (which may also be its real purpose) will be to stop progress in nuclear weapons development by countries that do not have the computer technology to simulate explosions, and thus to confine the legal right to develop newer, smaller, 'theatre' nuclear weapons that can be used against third world armies and navies, to the US, the UK and France.

It does not need to be spelt out that once theatre nuclear weapons have been made small and precise enough, the military dominance of the G-7 over the entire globe will be absolute. The West, which has a tenth of the world's population but consumes 60 percent of its resources, will feel secure at last. By refusing to sign the CTBT, India is threatening this entire edifice. The threat will only be postponed if India adopts the halfway option of letting the treaty go through. Indeed once the UN endorses the CTBT, it will gain a moral sanction. India's not having signed it will not protect it from huge reprisals, if it later decides to exercise its nuclear option and resumes the testing of nuclear weapons.

The latent confrontation between India and the G-7 will not therefore diminish it if New Delhi does not block the treaty. Only fools will think that the G-7's agenda ends with signing the CTBT. No sooner is this complete than they will turn to the framing of a similar ban on missile testing. Once again, a line will be drawn exempting the nuclear powers from the strictures of this treaty. And once more India's objection that this is an unequal treaty will be brushed aside contemptuously, as was done over the NPT, and in Geneva over the CTBT during the last six months. And why should this not be so? Has India not demonstrated that all it is capable of doing is blowing hot air?

Nor will India's confrontation with the G-7 end even there. The next area of where interests will clash will be the reorganisation of the UN. Does anyone think that the equally contemptuous dismissal of India's claim to a seat in the Security Council will be reversed if it is a good boy and does not block the CTBT? On both of these and other issues that will arise later, India will; find it more and more difficult to stand up for its rights, if it caves in today. The G-7 will frame positions that will take it for granted that India can be made to cave in. If India suddenly proves them wrong their anger and frustration will be far greater than it is today. Their willingness therefore to use open coercion, economic and even military will become correspondingly greater.

Thus whatever decision India takes today will bind if not just for the purposes of this particular treaty but will determine its position in the post cold war international order that is rapidly being built by the G-7. That position will be of a second class, subservient nation perennially equated with Pakistan and perennially inferior to China, not to mention the West.

There is only one correct position for India to take, and as the original proposer of the CTBT in 1954, it has a pre-eminent moral right to do so. India must tell the world that it will sign the CTBT only if it is truly comprehensive, i.e. bans all nuclear testing, including the so-called zero-yield testing in the lab. It is true that policing research in the labs is not feasible. But sooner or later the products of this research will have to be deployed as parts of the new weapons systems of the West. That deployment is what a truly comprehensive test ban treaty would stop. If the purpose of nuclear weapons is purely deterrent, the nuclear weapons powers already have all the bombs they need. They also have no natural enemies (outside of themselves) against whom they might need such weapons. Thus they will lose nothing by stopping all nuclear testing. This will halt the development of newer generations of weapons. That is the first essential step towards eventual elimination of nuclear weapons. If the western countries refuse, then it must veto the treaty. By doing that it will at least keep the road open to a truly comprehensive treaty in the future. If the present treaty goes through, with or without India, there will be no pressure left to stop nuclear weapons testing in future.

India: Official—No-War Talks Offer May Be 'Political Gesture'

BK2007075496 Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English 18 Jul 96 p 9

[Report by Prakash Nanda]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] External Affairs Minister Inder Kumar Gujral's reported statement in Parliament on Monday [22 July] that India was prepared to discuss a no-war pact with Pakistan does not mean that New Delhi is proposing such a move, officials in the Ministry of External Affairs [MEA] clarified.

"The minister was only responding to a supplementary question as to whether India's readiness to discuss the entire gamut of issues concerning Pakistan will include the possibility of a no-war pact. What he meant was that India was open to discuss everything. This does not necessarily mean that we are offering Pakistan a no-war pact," said a senior MEA official dealing with matters relating to Pakistan.

However as an idea, a no-war pact between India and Pakistan has evoked mixed reactions here. "I do not think much about the proposed no-war pact between the two countries. It is nothing more than a political gesture. Nothing is likely to come out of it," said former Foreign Secretary J.N. Dixit, who also claimed that in the mid-1980s he along with then Foreign Secretary M.K. Rasgotra, was actively involved in its negotiations following Pakistan's no-war pact proposal on September 15, 1981.

On the other hand, Prof. Kalim Bahadur of Jawaharlal Nehru University, a leading specialist on Pakistan, said, "it will be good if India and Pakistan sign a no-war pact. Because, by doing so we will be able to negate the Pakistani propaganda and expose all those critics who say that our military capability and nuclear ambiguity are solely meant for Pakistan."

"A no-war pact will strengthen our plea that our nuclear option will be determined by, among others, China, not Pakistan. It will also expose Pakistan's current position that it is not signing the proposed Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) just because India is not endorsing it."

Way back on December 22, 1949, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru had proposed a no-war pact with Pakistan. The offer then was renewed by his successors Lal Bahadur Shastri in 1965, Indira Gandhi in 1968 and 1972, Morarji Desai in 1977 and the then Foreign Minister P V. Narasimha Rao in 1981. And, each time Pakistan rejected it on the ground that the proposed pact was not accompanied by "a self-executing mechanism" to reach a settlement of the Kashmir dispute.

However, it was Pakistan that in the fifties proposed a mutual defence pact with India. New Delhi turned it down on the ground that since Pakistan was a military ally of the United States and thus an active player in the "cold war," India could not be in a position to come to Pakistan's defence in case it was attacked by a third country in the context of the super power-rivalry.

In 1981 President Zia-ul Haq proposed the no-war pact, to convince the American lawmakers that Islamabad will not use the $3.2 billion worth of U.S. military and economic aid given to Pakistan against India.

The aid had been given in the aftermath of the Soviet Union's intervention in Afghanistan in 1980.

"Pakistan's strategy was too obvious, and Indira Gandhi responded on January 1982 by counter-proposing a treaty of peace and friendship with Pakistan.

India: Report Views Entry Into ASEAN Regional Forum

BK2007074696 Madras THE HINDU in English 19 Jul 96 p 10

[Report by V. Jayanth]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Though India's entry into the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) — the security platform — was expected to be easy and routine, there were hiccups and some objections. But, finally the green signal was given.

Having made India a Dialogue Partner, ASEAN could not stop New Delhi's entry into the ARF. The association made it clear to its members that the criteria for future membership of the body should be discussed after the admission of India and Myanmar [Burma].

When the ARF holds its third meeting in Jakarta, Indonesia on July 23, ministers from the 19 member countries will formally ratify the move and take up further discussions. However, observers expect some plain speaking on Myanmar.

There have been teething problems for the ARF and its evolution has created unnecessary friction. The sensitive nature of the discussions and the unwieldy number of countries participating in it have only added to these problems.

The objectives of ARF are laudable. Its founder — the ASEAN — wants it to become a security plank to promote and protect peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region through dialogue and consensus. The promoters of the concept aim at increasing transparency on defence policy and issues, envisaging a stage when member countries can unveil their defence strategies and plans and probably even have an arms registry. But they also realise that it is not going to be an easy task, given the trade, political and strategic differences that persist among the member countries.

With the addition of India and Myanmar, the strength of the forum rises to 21. This includes the seven ASEAN members, the three potential members — Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar — the Dialogue Partners, including the U.S., the E.U., Australia and Japan, besides Russia and China.

Apart from the growing economic linkage with India, ASEAN wants to promote security exchanges too, recognising its role in maintaining peace and stability in the region. However, questions like who wanted India in and why and who did not want India still linger.

According to officials connected with the process, once India was made a Dialogue Partner, the seven member States had no reservations on its entry into the ARF. Singapore did the spade work and the other friends of India moved in to clear the clouds.

The three Muslim States of Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei had reservations. They did not want to let down Pakistan, which was also seeking the Dialogue Partner status and entry into the ARF. But in the spirit of consensus, ASEAN decided to take in only India for the moment.

When ASEAN intimated New Delhi rather late about its graduation to a full Dialogue Partner, Indonesia's foreign minister, Mr. Ali Alatas, as chairman of the standing committee, informed Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, then foreign minister, only of an invitation to the post-ministerial conference in July. There was no mention of the ARF, which was decided only in April this year at Yogjakarta. ASEAN sources said the reservations on India's entry stemmed from basically two reasons — geographical and strategic. The former Labour regime in Australia led by Mr. Paul Keating had raised objections because it considered India outside Southeast Asia and a potential threat to the regional balances taking shape. But the new coalition of Mr. John Howard had no such objections. The U.S. and Japan also voiced concerns primarily because India did not fit into their strategic and defence policies for the Asia Pacific. But their argument was that the ARF was already unwieldy, unable to discharge any effective function and that the criteria for future membership must be laid down before any new members were admitted. Questions have also arisen on why some countries in Southeast Asia were keen on getting India into the forum. Singapore, for instance, had promised to help India in this process and played a crucial role in ensuring New Delhi's entry. Having made it a Dialogue Partner, there was no valid reason to keep India out of the ARF.

But security analysts say it is apparent that the "China factor" played a major role in the ASEAN's moves to cultivate India as an alternative — both in the economic sphere for trade and investments, and on the security plank to balance both sides.

An academic in the National University of Singapore says, "Economically and in terms of security, China and India are two huge blocs for Southeast Asia. ASEAN has no defence-related problem with India, but is conscious of China's ambitions and intentions. It is clear that the current agenda of economic engagement of Beijing cannot continue beyond another 10 years. By then, China would become an economic power and may divert its attention to the unrealised military and territorial agenda. How can the now prosperous ASEAN and APEC [Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation] regions maintain their growth if there is a security threat?

How can they contain or engage China beyond 2010? These are the major preoccupations. "As a continuing factor, the Asia-Pacific region looks to the U.S. for its military presence in the region. About 100,000 American troops are stationed in this region, nearly half of them in Japan. Washington has pledged to maintain its security interest in the region, while the host countries have made many facilities available to the U.S. despite local problems as in Japan. Australia has joined the chorus of offering Washington base support, through the use of its Darwin port for an emergency. But the U.S. policy is invariably linked to China.

Countries like Singapore and Malaysia have strong reservations on the trend towards "trade wars" to replace the military friction between Washington and Beijing. ASEAN wants a stable relationship between the U.S., China and Japan to ensure and contribute to the security and prosperity of the region.

By the very nature of its charter and processes, ASEAN does not believe in reopening wounds or generating controversy. It adopts the approach of consensus and compromise through dialogue. It has advocated a continued engagement with China to divert its attention from a military agenda.

The three flash points in the region are the Taiwan Straits, which witnessed missile tests and a major military exercise by China a couple of months ago; the Korean peninsula where a peace initiative is refusing to take off, and the dispute over the Spratly islands in the South China Sea.

Despite discussions and the commitment to dialogue, Southeast and East Asian countries have moved to the top in the arms market, becoming the major buyers. The U.S. and Russia remain the largest exporters of arms and ammunition.

A recent study by the Stockholm International Research Institute (SIPRI), says that Asia doubled its purchase of conventional weapons last year. It listed China, South Korea, Egypt, Turkey and Malaysia as the top five importers of arms in 1995. Beijing had an import bill of $1,696 millions and Malaysia of $1,120 millions. Thailand and Japan figured in the top 10, while India and Indonesia took the 11th and 12th positions.

A feature of the current security environment is that most thorny issues are still being discussed by the contenders or rivals. This has been the only silver lining in the security cloud. But analysts say that new problems, frictions and flash points are developing. It is in this context that the ARF suggested "white papers" on defence policies and perceptions of member countries.

But what are India's interests and agenda in the ARF? New Delhi is evaluating its role and approach to Southeast Asia. Irrespective of what ASEAN or other members expect of India, the admission to the ARF provides New Delhi and its defence experts greater access to information and dialogue with counterparts. Already, there are academic, professional and research bodies deliberating security and defence issues. But the ARF becomes a political and official forum that can lead to positive interaction and results.

There are concerns that the ARF has not taken a more activist or involved stance on key security issues. But whatever the individual agenda of the member countries, the 21 ARF nations can make it a useful, constructive and productive platform to build confidence, understanding and reduce tensions in the region. That means the members should have the courage to face issues and problems squarely instead of succumbing to pressures or brushing them beneath the carpet. The third meeting in Jakarta should lay down an agenda for the ARF to achieve its goals and objectives within an acceptable time frame and prove its efficacy.

India: Delhi To Press for Membership of APEC Working Groups

BK2007111896 Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English 20 Jul 96 p 9

[Unattributed report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India will use its enhanced status with the ASEAN as a "full dialogue partner" to develop cooperation in infrastructure and human resources, A N Ram, secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), said here today.

Cooperation with the ASEAN in investment, trade, science and technology and tourism — the four sectors identified earlier for sectoral partnership — will, however, be reinforced through deeper cooperation facilitated by the full dialogue partnership, he said on the eve of External Affairs Minister I K Gujral's departure for Jakarta to attend two important ASEAN meetings.

These meetings will see the formal induction of India as the South East Asian grouping's full dialogue partner and as a member of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), Asia's nascent security arrangement.

India will use the opportunity provided by the ASEAN meetings to press its case for membership of three working groups of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), pending a three-year moratorium on new APEC membership.

MEA officials accompanying the minister said they expected the controversial Comprehensive Test Ban

Treaty (CTBT) to take up only a tiny portion of the entire proceedings in Jakarta. "This is not a one-agenda meeting," the officials pointed out.

Ram asserted that if and when the treaty figures in the discussions, bilateral or multilateral India's opposition to the CTBT in its present form will be conveyed unequivocally to other countries. "There is no need for us to be defensive about this."

He said India did not see the Jakarta conclave as an occasion exercise in cooperation, a forum to share a common interest in the security of Asia," he said.

Among the possible issues which may figure at the ARF meeting are maritime cooperation in Asia and confidence building measures in the region.

This will be the first time a developing country is participating in the post-ministerial conference (PMC) of the ASEAN. China and Russia will be admitted along with India to the FMC in Jakarta.

India is attaching a lot of importance to its enhanced status to gang up against this country on the nuclear issue. "It is an with the ASEAN as a full dialogue partner in view of the encouraging response from South East Asia to this country's economic reform programme [sentence as published]."

Since India began opening up its economy, four ASEAN countries have come into the top 20 bracket of foreign investors.

Thailand now ranks third among foreign investors in India while Singapore is sixth, followed immediately by Malaysia.

Officials said Indonesia have also been making major new investments in India recently.

India: Parliament Questions 'Attitude' of Kashmir Governor

BK2007075796 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 19 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The home minister, Mr. Indrajit Gupta, told the Lok Sabha today that the process to restore democracy in the Kashmir valley could be provoking those on the other side of the border. He said the exchange of fire along the border has increased recently. Mr. Gupta expressed the firm resolve of the government to ensure that the assembly poll process is not disturbed.

Mr. Gupta assured the house that he will soon find out the facts about the reported killing of 12 workers by militants in Kashmir. Responding to a charge made by the former prime minister, Mr. Chandra Shekhar, the minister said he also is very displeased with the attitude of the state governor who did not respond to frantic inquiries about the fate of the workers for more than 12 hours. Earlier, raising the issue during zero hour, Mr. Chandra Shekhar severely criticized the governor for what he said not responding to inquiries about the fate of the workers. Several opposition members also criticized the attitude of the governor and some of them wanted to raise a privilege issue against him. The deputy speaker, Mr. Suraj Bhan, who was in the chair, directed the government to take a serious note of the charges.

The Jammu and Kashmir governor, General K.V. Krishna Rao, has regretted the misunderstanding with the former prime minister, Mr. Chandra Shekhar, over the issue. In a statement issued in Jammu today, he said the names of 11 laborers, who were killed, and the five injured were faxed to the office of the former prime minister this morning.

India: Article Views Congress-BSP Alliance

BK2207063196 Varanasi AJ in Hindi 4 Jul 96 p 6

[Article by Rajendra Dwiwedi: "Congress-Bahujan Samaj Party Alliance—New Political Environment"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The formation of an electoral alliance between the Congress and the Bahujan Samaj Party [BSP] has created a new political environment in Uttar Pradesh, even though it has triggered a great civil war within the Congress. A larger section of Congress men believes that the partnership will enable the Congress to consolidate its position in the state.

Brahmans, Muslims, and the low-caste people have been the vote banks of the Congress in previous elections and because of this, the party had been in power in the state for 20 consecutive years. In those days, even leaders like Acharya Narendra Dev and Atal Behari Vajpayee had to face defeat at the hands of the Congress candidates of a lesser political stature. Congress received the first jolt when it suddenly lost ground in 1967. At that time, Chandra Bhanu Gupta of the Congress was the chief minister of the state. On 1 April 1967, the party was reduced to a minority status when Chaudhary Charan Singh, along with his 18 colleagues, crossed the floor and defected to the opposition in the Legislative Assembly. The chief minister, who believed in the politics of principles, stepped down, disregarding suggestions by several of his cabinet colleagues not to resign immediately.

Later a coalition government was formed with Chaudhary Charan Singh as the chief minister. Although the Congress managed to improve its position several times after that jolt, it continued to lose its popular base. The three pillars that used to propel Congress into power gradually started to disengage themselves from the party. While the Brahman voters turned toward the Bharatiya Janata Party, the Muslims started to waver between one party and another. The low-caste voters gradually got divided into two blocks—one supporting the BSP and the other the Bharatiya Janata Party.

This hijacking of the Congress' vote banks virtually rattled the party's edifice and the number of its members of parliament and assembly legislators elected from the state continued to dwindle. Its victory in 1980 and 1984 elections was due to the Janata Party government and the sympathy wave created in its favor by the assassination of Mrs. Indira Gandhi. During Rajiv Gandhi's lifetime, the Congress had to sit on opposition benches for the second time after 1977. After the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, the Congress totally lost ground in Uttar Pradesh. It lost one election after another, gradually losing its popular base.

Even though Congress has won the same number of seats — five — in 1996 elections as it had in 1991, the percentage of votes it received this time has gone down considerably and it has had to be content with only 8 percent of the total votes in spite of the all-out efforts by party's state president Jitendra Prasad to secure more votes. Congress leaders of the stature of Balram Singh Yadav, Salman Khursheed, and Ram Naresh Yadav have had to face defeat. This shameful situation in which Congress finds itself now can be attributed to the erosion of its three major vote banks, but the party's central leadership is equally responsible for this. The party's central leadership did not learn any lessons from the shameful defeats Congress suffered in the Lok Sabha elections in 1991 and the state Legislative Assembly elections in 1991 and 1993. It did not take any step to rejuvenate the party so that it could regain its lost ground in Uttar Pradesh. Of course, in later years, a small effort was made toward this end with the appointment of Jitendra Prasad as the president of the state unit, but by then the Congress' condition has become so miserable that even Jitendra Prasad's untiring efforts could not salvage it. His efforts, however, enabled the party to somehow regain the five seats it had won in the previous election.

After these polls, Congress lost power at the central level also. Lately, the party has been anxiously looking for ways to improve its position, and that is why it has forged an electoral alliance with the Bahujan Samaj Party. In the last Lok Sabha elections, the BSP received 20.63 percent of the total votes and won six seats, while the Samajwadi Party [SP] secured 20.63 [as published] percent votes and won 16 seats. The BSP's percentage of votes was calculated on the basis of the total votes received by its candidates in all 85 constituencies, while the SP fielded candidates only for 63 seats. Therefore, if the total votes received by the SP as well as its allied parties are counted together, the percentage of votes will be 28.6.

Kanshi Ram, the Bahujan Samaj Party [BSP] supremo, is a seasoned player. That is why his shares command high rates in the political market despite the fact that his party got only a small percentage of votes and won only a few seats in the recent elections. Every political party, be it the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP], the Janata Dal, the Communist Party of India [CPI], or the Communist Party of India-Marxist [CPI-M], wants to have an understanding with the BSP. Although the Congress has already forged an alliance with the BSP, the Janata Dal has still not raised hopes of doing so. All parties are eager to reach an understanding with the BSP to form a non-BJP front. The CPI and the CPI-M, which have been completely wiped out from the state and which have reached a state of total inertia, do not tire of highlighting the importance of the BSP in the hope of winning some seats with the support of the Bahujan Samaj Party.

It is widely believed that the source of the BSP's strength is its low-caste vote bank, but a close analysis of facts explodes this myth. It has always been believed that whichever party enjoys the support of the Brahmans, other higher caste voters, too, will vote for that party. Among the backward classes, any party that musters the support of the Yadav voters is supposed to enjoy the backing of the entire backward classes. Similarly, Jaats are very influential and politically conscious among the low-caste voters. Whichever party the Jaats happen to support, all low-caste voters are believed to be on the side of that party, even though the Jaats command only 13 percent of the total low-caste votes in the state. Among these low castes, voters belonging to subcastes like Khatik, Pasi, and Kori are mostly with the Bharatiya Janata Party. Since the BSP wields considerable influence among the Jaats, the people believe that all low-caste voters are on the side of the Bahujan Samaj Party.

A close analysis of the six seats won by the BSP in recent Lok Sabha elections in Uttar Pradesh reveals that the BSP has secured only two of the 16 reserved seats, while the BJP has got 14 and the Samajwadi Party two seats. BSP supremo Kanshi Ram himself got defeated in his own constituency by none other than his own former disciple Jangbahadur Patel, who had earlier quit the BSP and joined the Samajwadi Party. In spite of that, a misconception has gained ground in political circles that the low-caste vote bank is with the Bahujan Samaj Party.

Presently, as regard the art of political bargaining and taking full advantage of it, there is no match for Kanshi Ram. He plays his cards so astutely that even dissidents, like the Bashir faction, become awestruck and toe his line. In spite of the BSP's alliance with the Congress, the Janata Dal and the CPI-M are still hopeful of reaching an understanding with the Bahujan Samaj Party. Kanshi Ram's main aim is to reinstall Mayawati in the highest seat of power in the state, but the BJP and the SP will not let him realize this dream under any circumstances. Kalyan Singh of the BJP and Mulayam Singh Yadav of the SP are the declared candidates for the chief ministership of the state and they will not accept the assumption of that office by Mayawati once again. The position of Janata Dal, CPI, and the CPI-M is now so bad in Uttar Pradesh that even after forging an alliance with the BSP, they will not be able to win as many seats as may be needed to help Kanshi Ram realize his dream.

Forging an alliance with the Congress had become a political compulsion—to some extent — for Kanshi Ram. In spite of all its shortcomings and failures, the Congress still maintains some vote banks in the state. If the low-caste Jaat community sincerely votes in favor of the congress, the party will have no difficulty in securing 50-70 seats.

One benefit that the BSP will reap by forging an alliance with the Congress is that it will be able to get the higher caste votes divided. The higher caste voters, who are Congress loyalists at heart but vote for the BJP because of the Congress' miserable condition, will return to the Congress fold. The second benefit will be that the allegation about the BSP's malice toward the higher castes will ease to some extent.

Even though the Congress-BSP alliance will not be able to win the majority to form a government in the state, it will certainly make the hitherto direct contest between the BJP and the SP a triangular one. It is this triangular fight that will benefit the alliance. If no party wins an absolute majority in the Legislative Assembly, the political bargaining will fall into the hands of Kanshi Ram, who knows much better than others how to take full advantage of the situation.

Iran

Iran Offers Condolences to TWA Crash Victim's Families

NC2007082396 Paris AFP in English 0711 GMT 20 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Tehran, July 20 (AFP) - Iran on Saturday [20 July] expressed its condolences to the families of the 230 people killed in the crash of a TWA 747 near New York this week.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Mahmud Mohammadi also voiced "regret and condolences to the government and nation of France" for the 40 French nationals aboard the Paris-bound plane.

He, however, stopped short of sending condolences to the government of the United States, as the two countries have not had diplomatic relations since the aftermath of the 1979 Islamic revolution which toppled the pro-American shah. [passage omitted]

Iran: Iranian Embassy Link To TWA Plane Crash

LD2107165796 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 21 Jul 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in London denied the allegation of the daily THE TIMES on 20 July, concerning Iran's involvement in the crash of a TWA passenger plane.

According to the Islamic Republic News Agency, the Iranian embassy in London has also sent a letter of protest to the daily THE TIMES.

The official sources in the United States have not yet commented on the reasons why the TWA passenger plane crashed and over 220 people lost their lives. This happened last Wednesday [17 July] night and in its aftermath a vast investigation has started to survey the reasons responsible for the crash. Commenting on the subject, the U.S. officials, including U.S. President Bill Clinton, have stated at this stage no certain reason can be presented for the crash of the passenger plane; and that any definite comment is conditional to the announcement of the result of the investigations.

The question which is brought up here is what objective does THE TIMES daily pursue through making such baseless allegations against Iran? No doubt the most clear response to such falsification has been officially presented by the embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in London. The Iranian embassy in London writes to TIMES that such trend resembles making fun of the prestige of a nation, and has been seriously criticized.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has been exposed to such plots many times and perhaps there is no need to repeat them all. But the bomb explosion in Oklahoma in April 1995 was the most serious and news-making issue that at that period the Western press and officials, affiliated to world imperialism, claimed to have taken place by Iran. However, the investigation and inspection by the specialist proved that the allegation was baseless and that the followers of Dividian sect in the United States have done the bombing in Oklahoma. Therefore, even Clinton warned the U.S. press against any pre-judgment before the reasons for the crash of the TWA passenger plane have been discovered.

It seems now that some of the press in the West continue with their blind-folded move of the past; and instead of learning a lesson from the past, they prefer to use any event in every possible manner against the Islamic Republic of Iran. The falsification by THE TIMES of London should be evaluated in this regard.

Iran: French Weekly Reports Opening of Tehran 'Terror' Summit

TA2107170296 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1400 GMT 21 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A French weekly reports in today's issue that according to information it has obtained, a conference of terror organizations operating under Iranian auspices opened in Tehran yesterday. The weekly claims that the purpose of the conference was to examine the possibility of perpetrating terror attacks against U.S. targets as well as other targets around the world. Our correspondent Eldad Beck reports from Paris:

[Begin Beck recording] According to LE JOURNAL DE DIMANCHE, the terror summit that opened in Tehran yesterday is being held in the same spirit as a similar summit held exactly one month ago in Tehran by representatives of extremist organizations — such as Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], the Islamic Jihad, and the Islamic Movement for Change, which assumed responsibility for the car-bomb attack at the U.S. base in Saudi Arabia — operating under inspiration from Iran.

The summit's agenda includes planning attacks, especially against U.S. targets around the world. At the same time, the weekly quotes a source in the French secret service who said that if the TWA airliner disaster was the result of a terror attack, it was not done under the sponsorship of Iran, Libya, Iraq, or Syria. The French secret service official believes that if the incident was a terror attack, it was carried out by Sunni fundamentalist groups or, more precisely, by the disciples of the blind Egyptian Shaykh 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman who also carried out the attack on New York's World Trade Center. The evidence that can corroborate or refute the assumption of a terror attack in this case, however, still lies hidden deep in the Atlantic Ocean. [end recording]

Iran: Editorial Urges 'Common Strategy' Against Oppression

LD2007071596 Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 16 Jul 96 p 2

[Editorial: "Netanyahu — A Blessing in Disguise"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Iran, from the very first day of the culmination of the Islamic revolution, tried to bring all the Third World countries together so that they can address their grievances and hardships through a common strategy.

The Islamic Republic, by eliminating foreign influence in Iran, tried to present a model for other developing countries across the globe to follow.

Iran does not claim to have achieved all its objectives. The Islamic Revolution, however, can reasonably claim that it played a significant role in awakening the masses in the Third World through its message which says: "No surrender to the oppressors."

Following the same policy, Iran threw all its political and moral support behind the oppressed Palestinians whose lands have been usurped by Israel with the active assistance of the Zionist lobby in the United States.

Iran extended its support to the oppressed Palestinians and deprived Lebanese even at the cost of its own national interests. The oppressor United States is the enemy of Iran because the Islamic Republic has cut off its brutal hands from this country and insists that others do the same.

No power, or superpower, can oppress and exploit other nations if all the countries in the world, particularly the Third World, through a common strategy, support each other in the fight against superpower hegemonies and other exploitative political concepts.

The eight Arab foreign ministers in Muscat recognized that "Syria has an inalienable right to struggle against the occupation of its territory by Israel."

It is the same struggle which in the past was dubbed by the United States and the Zionists as "Syrian-sponsored terrorism." Similar allegations are made against Iran through the ongoing U.S.-Zionist disinformation campaign.

The foreign ministers of the Damascus Declaration also supported the 22d and 23d June Arab summit declaration which warned new Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to "pursue the policy of land-for-peace or face the end of normalizing ties with Arab governments."

The peace process, initiated in 1993, was not meant to be a deal between Israel and only one or two Arab countries.

The United States and Russia were the co-sponsors of the peace process. The United States, under an inexperienced leader, has lost credibility as an honest broker. But Russia, the European Union (EU), and above all, the United Nations still shoulder crucial responsibilities regarding the success of the Mideast peace process.

We are sure that EU leaders, such as French President Jacques Chirac, as well as Russian President Boris Yeltsin, will continue their endeavours for bringing Netanyahu back to his senses. It is their historic responsibility. And the Arabs, thinking Netanyahu is a blessing in disguise, will further solidify their unity.

Iran: Paper Accuses Iran of Anti-Bahrain Activities in London

LD2107155296 London THE SUNDAY TELEGRAPH in English 21 Jul 86 p 26

[Article by Con Coughlin, chief foreign correspondent: "Iranians Plot Bahrain Strife"]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Iranian-backed Islamic militants are using Britain as a base from which to orcehstrate attempts to overthrow Bahrain's ruling family as part of a systematic campaign to destabilise the oil-rich Gulf region.

Confidential documents acquired by THE SUNDAY TELEGRAPH show that Islamic fundamentalists opposed to Bahrain's Al Khalifah family have set up a network of offices in north London which they use to coordinate their attacks agains the emirate's rulers.

Terrorist attacks in the tiny sheikdom, the Gulf's main financial centre and an important base for the U.S. Fifth Fleet, have incrfeased dramatically in the past year.

Western intelligence sources claim some of the attacks, which have provoked Bahrain's worst crisis since it was granted independence from Britain 25 years ago, were carried out on receipt of faxed orders from Islamic militants in London.

The militants have at least four offices in London which they use to pass instructions to activists based in bahrain. The offices are run by Bahraini exiles who have taken advantage of Britains's liberal asylum laws to seek political refugee status.

Despite the efforts of Michael Howard, the home Secretary, to close loopholes in political asylum legislation, London is now recognised as the main international centre for Islamic fundamentalists seeking to overthrow pro-Western governments.

In recent months the British Government has been embarrassed by revelations that Palestinian and Algerian terrorist groups masterminded attacks overseas from their London offices, in Willisend and Maida Vale. They are understood to receive their orders direct from Bahraini dissidents based in the Iranian holy city of Qom, a renowned hotbed of Islamic radicalism.

According to Bahraini officials, the campaign is led by a dissident sheikh, who sought refuge in Iran and is responsible for the estimated 250 Bahrainis resident in Qom.

The orders are passed throough Dar-ol-Hekma 9Farsi for "the House of Science"), located in Qom.

The sheikh is said to be the spiritual head of Hizballah Bahrain, reputed masterminds of the conspiracy to overthrow the ruling family. The Bahrainis say he mediates between the Iranian authorities and the Bahrainis, most of whom have received training from Iran's Revolutionary Guards.

"The London offices receive their orders from Iran and then pass them on to activists in Bahrain" said a Western intelligence source.

"The activists then act on the instructions they have received to carry out terrorist attacks."

Staff at two of the offices contacted by THE SUNDAY TELEGRAPH last week refused to comment on reports that they were passing on orders from Iran to bahrain. "This is a private business and we have nothing to say about our affairs," said one employee, who confirmed he was from Bahrain but would not provide his name.

The Bahraini authorities have regularly accused Iran of responsibility for the wave of disturbances in the emirate over recent months.

Last month the Bahrainis claimed a coup when, in effect, a group of dissidents confessed on television to having received training and financial support from Iran. So far, more tha 50 dissidents have been arrested and the Bahrainis say they have foiled at least one plot to overthrow the government.

Bahrain's Al Khalifah family, who are Sunni Muslims, have had difficult relations with the emirate's predominantly Shiite Muslim subjects since coming to power in the 1920s. Their authority has been further challenged by an Iranian claim which, despite being resolved in the Al Khalifah's favour by a United Nations commission in 1970, is still a bone of contention in Tehran.

The Bahrainis claim that Iran, whose population is predominantly Shiite Muslim, has been deliberately stirring up trouble among Bahrain's Shiite community in an attempt to provoke discord. [passage omitted]

Iran: Deputy Foreign Minister Visits Turkey, Meets Ministers

*LD1907205396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian
1630 GMT 19 Jul 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] Mr. [Ala'eddin] Borujerdi, the deputy foreign minister for Asian and Pacific affairs, on a visit to Turkey as head of a political delegation met with the Turkish interior minister.

During the meeting, Turkish Interior Minister Mehmet Agar referred to the friendly and historic relations between the two countries and said: The Iranian and Turkish borders have been borders of peace and friendship for centuries.

Referring to recent border incidents, he said: We are intent on resolving these problems within the framework of the two countries' friendly relations.

In a meeting between Mr. Borujerdi and Turkish Energy Minister Recai Kutan, the two countries' cooperation in oil and gas was discussed. During this meeting, Kutan stressed the need for his country to secure its energy requirements from Iran and called for the expansion of cooperation with Iran in other areas, such as electricity and mining.

Our country's deputy foreign minister said: The Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to supply Turkey's energy requirements on the basis of negotiations undertaken within the framework of bilateral cooperation.

Iran: Editorial Stresses Importance of Ties to Turkey

*LD2007072896 Tehran IRAN NEWS in English
17 Jul 96 pg 2, 13*

[Editorial: "Let Erbakan Set His House in Order"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Turkish media recently reported that in a retaliatory move Iranian forces crossed the border into Turkish territory and killed eight people and injured a few others.

It is also reported that the Iranian ambassador to Ankara was summoned to the Turkish Foreign Ministry to receive an official protest in this connection.

Iranian officials have so far made no comment on the matter.

Irano-Turkish relations are going through a sensitive phase and both countries must watch out for the evil designs of enemies who have been trying to create a serious rift between the two neighbouring Muslim nations.

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister 'Ala'eddin Borujerdi is due to fly to Ankara tonight carrying a message from President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani for President Suleyman Demirel and Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan.

There are two Turkish factions which have been, and still are, trying to set the two neighbours against each other.

One faction, within the Turkish armed forces, embarked on an irresponsible military campaign and raided Iranian villages killing several civilians.

Another faction, which has systematically and repeatedly tried to create ethnic tension between Tehran and Ankara is the strong Jewish lobby in Turkey.

Fortunately, Necmettin Erbakan, the new prime minister, seems ready to assume friendly relations with Iran. It is no secret that Erbakan wants to establish a regional Islamic front for a broader multinational cooperation.

Both Iran and Turkey should take extra care not to provide an opportunity for the Washington-Tel Aviv coalition to meddle into their affairs through their local agents and cronies.

Iranian officials must do all that is necessary to safeguard our national interests, protect our citizens, and preserve our national pride. But, at the same time, we must make allowances for the new Turkish government to fully establish itself and take control of that country's affairs by trying to minimize any tension between Tehran and Ankara.

The only beneficiaries of a tense Irano-Turkish relation are Tel Aviv and Washington.

The Islamic Republic should do all to discourage U.S. and Israeli intrigues aimed at damaging the Irano-Turkish relations.

Erbakan's position is not yet quite stable because of the opposition of a certain faction of the Armed Forces and a group in that country's counter-intelligence community who believe themselves to be the guardians of the Turkish system.

The new prime minister is already facing mounting domestic pressure due to the ailing Turkish economy and the separatist movement of the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK).

Under these circumstances, Iran, following its own foreign policy principles which dictate the pursuit of national interests, should endeavour to accommodate the new Turkish prime minister, so that he can set his own house in order and begin to purge the country from elements which desire to harm Irano-Turkish relations.

Iran: Mubarak 'Beaten to Ground' by 'Active' Syrian Diplomacy

NC1907153796 Tehran SALAM in Persian 10 Jul 96 p 12

[Commentary by M. Veysi: "Mubarak—Subdued by Faruq al-Shar's Diplomacy"]

[FBIS Translated Text] As the regional media reported, Egyptian President Husni Mubarak criticized Iran for interfering in the internal affairs of some Arab countries and rejected a proposal by Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' to convene a tripartite session of the foreign ministers of Iran, Egypt, and Syria. In view of the importance of the issue some points are worth mentioning:

Egypt and Syria have recently been making joint efforts to reorganize the divergent Arab countries and eliminate differences among them. These efforts, which stem from the common concern of Cairo and Damascus over the modus operandi of the so-called Middle East peace trend, have been intensified due to the extremist cabinet of Netanyahu assuming office in the occupied territories and a military accord being signed between Turkey and the Zionist regime.

The Egyptian Government is displeased and perturbed over the undermining of its role as the "most important conduit of contacts between Tel Aviv and the Arabs," especially since the signing of the compromise accord by the Zionist regime with the PLO, as well as with Jordan, and the increasing economic and political relations between the littoral shaykhdoms of the Persian Gulf and Tel Aviv. Egypt has realized that in circumstances in which each of the reactionary and obsequious Arabs is directly entering into dealings and bilateral relations with the Zionists ruling over Tel Aviv, any mention of Egypt's leadership in the Arab world becomes inconsequential.

And countries such as Iraq and Sudan too are not willing to accept Egypt's claims of leadership of the Arab world due to their historical feuds and strained relations with Cairo. Countries such as Syria and Saudi Arabia are also persistent claimants to this role.

Syria, which can be considered to have lost most with regard to the signing of the compromise accord between the PLO and the Zionist regime, is under intense political pressure to make a compromise with the Zionist regime. This pressure has been heightened with the lifting of economic sanctions against the Zionist regime by the littoral Arab states of the Persian Gulf as well as by the signing of the military agreement between Ankara and Tel Aviv.

Naturally, this kind of political pressure and the security dangers stemming from the above should have found Syria able to remove pressure and danger from itself and able to elicit Egypt's support for its policy by extending some privileges to Cairo. Of course, due to the intelligent tactics of the Syrian echelons, the issue has assumed a different form.

In such circumstances, when Iran is also apprehensive of the military agreement between Turkey and the Zionist regime, and has tacitly endorsed efforts by Syria and Egypt to unite the Arab countries, Damascus' diplomatic apparatus propounded the issue of Syria's mediation between Iran and Egypt, Iran and Bahrain, and Egypt and Sudan.

As the one implementing the policies of the Syrian leadership, Faruq al-Shar' intended to forge an Islamic Arab-Iranian front as a foil to the expansionism of the Zionists by acting as the mediator between Iran and Egypt and between Iran and Bahrain. Then, by resorting to active regional diplomacy, he could put the Mubarak government a step behind Syria in vying for the title of the "leader of the Arab world."

Naturally, if the Syrian initiative had reached fruition, Syria — as the link between Iran and the Arabs — would have gained a unique and exceptional status in the Arab world as well as in the region.

In such conditions, Mubarak has realized that he has been overpowered in the more superior political game of Hafiz al-Asad and has no reasons for direct opposition to Faruq al-Shar's mediation bid and Syria's preeminent role in the region. So, to combat Damascus' active diplomacy, he has resorted to the two old ploys of accusing Iran of interfering in Egypt's internal affairs and Tehran of causing problems for the security and stability of the Persian Gulf shaykhdoms.

Mubarak was propounding these claims while Iran and Bahrain were moving toward defusing tension in bilateral relations and Faruq al-Shar' was taking successful steps in this direction, contrary to Mubarak's wishes. Now, if Mubarak's government is trying to be more Catholic than the pope and, due to his ineptitude in the face of domestic problems, including the uprising of the Islamic groups, he is seeking to take a stand — instead of the echelons of the littoral Arab countries of the Persian Gulf — regarding relations with Tehran, one reason for this is that he has been beaten to the ground by the active diplomacy of Faruq al-Shar and his associates.

Iran: Iranian Aide in Cairo Rejects Egypt's 'Terrorism' Charge

MM1907131596 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 19 Jul 96 p 2

[Report by Sawsan Abu-Husayn: "Iranian Diplomat Expresses His Astonishment at Cairo's Accusations"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo — In a statement to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 'Ali Asghar Mohammadi, Iranian charge d'affaires in Cairo, has renewed his country's call for the establishment of strong relations with Arab states on the bases of mutual respect and noninterference in internal affairs.

Mohammadi expressed his astonishment at what he termed the recent Egyptian escalation following the announcement of a Syrian mediation effort to improve Arab-Iranian relations.

He said that Egypt has no justification for accusing Iran of terrorism. He added that Tehran has no interest in exporting terrorism to the region's states, because it is "the largest state in the Middle East and east Asia at all levels: militarily, politically, economically, and ideologically." He went on to say that Iran respects its relations with all states of the world, but it gives special attention to the Arab region, the Gulf states, and Saudi Arabia. He pointed out that dialogue between Egypt and Iran is based on mutual respect.

Mohammadi denied his country's interference in Egypt's affairs via Sudan, saying that satellites can detect such things, especially in this technologically advanced age. On Iran's support for Hizballah he said that Lebanese Hizballah has a stronger relationship with Syria.

Iran: German Official Praises Iran's Role in POW Exchange Deal

LD2107174496 Tehran IRNA in English 1411 GMT 21 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Damascus, July 21, IRNA — Germany praised the Islamic Republic of Iran for its constructive role in making Bonn's mediation efforts successful in finalizing a deal on exchange of bodies and prisoners between the Islamic resistance forces and the Zionist regime.

Speaking to IRNA, German Secretary of State and coordinator of intelligence operations Bernd Schmidbauer added that without Iran's assistance he could not have been able to bring about the swap.

The German mediator and officials of Lebanese Hizballah agreed Friday [19 July] night to exchange remains of two Israeli soldiers with bodies of 120 combatants of the Islamic resistance forces.

According to the accord, 16 mercenaries of Lahad's forces, held by Hizballah will be freed in exchange for 20 combatants of the Islamic resistance forces, imprisoned by the Zionist regime in Khyam prison.

The exchange is to be carried out today in Lebanon.

The German official said that Syria's role in bringing about the deal was also remarkable.

Schmidbauer said that Germany during the past three months in an impartial manner tried its best to bring the two warring sides to the negotiating table.

The German official described Iran-Germany relations as excellent and said that officials of the two countries are in constant touch with one another.

Iran: German Prosecutor Attacked for Slander

96LH0181A Tehran KAR VA KARGAR in Persian 17 Mar 96 p 2

[FBIS Translated Text] Recently the political factions in power in Germany, and especially this nation's judicial apparatus obviously dancing to the Zionist tune, have made illogical and vengeful decisions and have been contemptuous toward the government and the nation of Iran. In the first phase, it canceled Dr. Velayati's trip to Germany, and then it issued a verdict against our nation's minister of intelligence, acting in enmity against the Islamic Republic of Iran. In this regard several points are worthy of reflection:

1. The Government of Germany has been Iran's greatest trading partner in recent years. So far, because the hostile policies of America and Zionism against the Islamic Republic have not been coordinated, Germany has held a preeminent position among the people of our country because of the public's state of mind and beliefs. While this matter still leaves open the possibility for continued relations in various areas, it will further clarify the long-term outlook for cooperation.

2. Recent actions by the Germany's judicial apparatus indicate a lack of coordination in this nation's ruling apparatus. The two-faced nature of its adoption of positions and policies indicate that the judicial apparatus and the German Intelligence and Security Organization are strictly dominated by the Zionists. This influence is such that it even affects Germany's economic and political policies in the domain of its international relations.

Based on the existing indications, the Zionists have so much influence in Germany's security and judicial systems that this country has become a parade ground for terrorist leaders and opponents of the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The fact that at least one meeting per month is held by these terrorists is testimony to our claim that Germany has become a secure refuge for opponents of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

On the other hand, the people of Iran have not yet forgotten the confessions by U.S. spies which were also broadcast on television, in which they clearly declared that they had made Germany the center for their terrorist operations.

3. These indications and hundreds of other testimonies are evidence that the scenario being carried out today by Germany's judicial apparatus is being fed by the Zionists. The Zionist Social Party and Germany's Green Party are acting well in the service of the goals of international Zionism. To put it more clearly, the Green Party has turned on the green light for the terrorist march.

4. It is quite clear that the ultimate goal of Zionism and America in taking these steps is bringing pressure to bear on Germany and in general on the Europeans, because Europe's failure to go along with America's hostile policies against the Islamic Republic is unacceptable for installing the new world order!

America's goal is to bring pressure on Iran and ultimately to bring about the surrender of our government and great nation and to take over our nation's economic markets. Since they have as yet been unsuccessful in this, they have set out to make Europe and especially Germany (which has good relations with Iran) go along with them, in order thereby to achieve their evil objectives.

We thus believe that the recent actions by Germany's judicial apparatus are both damaging to this country's relations with Iran and undermine the general beliefs of our people with regard to Germany.

Therefore, the Iranian Government and nation cannot tolerate such insults to the nation's political officials, and second, it is appropriate for the German Government to take a more reasonable look at these issues. Otherwise, the general opinion of our people regarding the Government of Germany will change.

Iran: Rafsanjani, Pakistani Speaker Discuss Kashmir Issue

LD2007190996 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 20 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Hashemi-Rafsanjani today received Pakistan's National Assembly Speaker Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani.

Mr. Gilani said that Pakistan attaches special importance to the expansion of relations and friendship with the Islamic Republic of Iran, and believes that, among the countries of the world, Iran and Pakistan have the best and strongest ties and mutual interests.

Mr. Gilani pointed to Iran's economic, social, and technical progress following the Islamic revolution and reported on the outcome of his talks in Iran. He thanked Iran for the principled and wise stance it had adopted toward the Kashmir issue and also for its formula for mediating between India and Pakistan. He said: Pakistan supports this formula and appreciates Iran's efforts. President Hashemi-Rafsanjani, for his part, said that Pakistan is Iran's best friend in the world.

Regarding Kashmir, the president said: The Islamic Republic of Iran will put all its efforts toward the restoration of the rights of Kashmir's people and also toward the establishment of peace in the region.

IRAN: Pakistani Assembly Speaker Addresses Majles

LD2107114696 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 21 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Mr. Yusuf Raza Gilani, Pakistan's National Assembly Speaker, visited the Majles this morning and after familiarizing himself with legislative activities in the Islamic Republic of Iran, he addressed the deputies, saying: The people of Pakistan greatly respect the Majles of the Islamic Republic of Iran which has played such a very important role in Iran's political life since the Islamic revolution.

Pakistan's National Assembly Speaker called for greater effort on the part of the two countries' parliaments to strengthen relations, especially economic relations, between Iran and Pakistan. In describing his country's international position, he explained: Pakistan is a peace-loving country and has no aggressive intentions against any country.

He said that Pakistan has always tried to have peaceful and good neighborly relations with India, based on mutual respect for their national independence; equal rights and non-interference in each others' internal affairs. He added: It is vital for the Kashmir dispute to be resolved in accordance with the resolutions of the United Nations.

He said: We wish to resolve the problems of our Afghan brothers and believe that the only solution that could last in Afghanistan would be one which is realistic, based on justice and supported by all the groups.

Majles Speaker Mr. [Akbar] Nateq-Nuri also spoke about relations between Iran and Pakistan. He described as good and acceptable the level of relations between them and said: We have always sought peace and security in the region in which we live, and we condemn war, killings, and violation of people's rights, especially the rights of Muslims in Palestine, Bosnia, Kashmir and other parts of the world. We call for the restoration of the rights of nations on the basis of justice and truth.

Mr. Nateq-Nuri said: Iran has good relations with Pakistan and India and they could take advantage of this opportunity and blessing to resolve their problems, if they so wish.

He added: Iran and Pakistan can coordinate to assist Afghanistan to end its civil war and fratricide.

Mr. Nateq-Nuri pointed to the concern felt by global arrogance and America over the revival of Islamic ideology and the spread of pure Muhammadan Islam in the world. He emphasized: It is these Islamic nations and governments who should endeavor to revive and spread the divine tenets of pure Muhammadan Islam, through friendship, unity and greater cooperation with each other.

Iran: Chechen Crisis May Bury Russian Credibility in Muslim World

LD2107080796 Tehran IRNA in English 0708 GMT 21 Jul 96

["Russia's Friendship with Muslim States a Political Prerogative" — IRNA headline]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, July 21, IRNA — After the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, Russian leaders had no alternative but to revise their foreign policy and make effective changes in their outlook vis-a-vis Muslim countries, particularly those in their neighborhood, a morning daily 'KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL' wrote Sunday [21 July].

Commenting on present Moscow's cordial relations with its Muslim neighbors, it said these were brought about because of President Boris Yeltsin's vision regarding the changed global circumstances following the end of the cold war.

There is reason to believe that the existing understanding and mutual respect between Russia and the Muslim world, will not be blurred irrespective of closer Russian-U.S. relations, it added.

However, the editorial stressed, "the threat to this situation is Moscow's handling of the crisis in Chechnya," and pointed out to the loss of innocent Muslim lives in Chechnya and the indiscriminate bombing raids on Chechen villages.

The renewed Russian onslaught against Chechen fighters and non-combatants alike is reminiscent of Soviet-era atrocities in Muslim Afghanistan, it said, noting that this was a foreign war waged by the Red Army and had been the Soviet Union's sole military defeat outside its borders.

Muslims and Moscow's true friends would like to see reason prevail in the ongoing Chechen crisis which has the potential to bury Moscow's political credibility and its economic reforms in the same grave, the article concluded.

Iran: Commentator Discusses Russian Role in Tajikistan Peace

NC1907144596 Tehran ABRAR in Persian 16 Jul 96 p 12

[Commentary by Mozhgan Tavassoli: "The Establishment of Stability—A Prerequisite for Tajikistan's Development"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The fifth round of the Tajikistan peace talks resumed after a four-month interval in Ashgabat on 8 July. These talks are expected to continue for two weeks. Presiding over this round is the UN secretary general's emissary and participants include representatives from Iran, Russia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and some of the Central Asian countries.

During this round the representatives of the Tajikistan Government and opposition members will discuss issues such as the exchange of prisoners. The main issue in these talks is the division of power. The establishment of the ruling council of the coalition government in Tajikistan with the participation of various groups and Tajikistan Government officials will be the salient point in these discussions.

Since 1994 four rounds of official talks have been convened in Moscow, Tehran, Islamabad, and Almaty. Each time the results were not very dazzling except for the fourth round and we continued to witness violence and clashes as well as cease-fire violations. This round is different from previous ones in two aspects: First, the change of the UN emissary for Tajikistan and, second, the end of the election campaign in Russia and the reelection of Boris Yeltsin.

During the election period, Yeltsin raised the slogan of restoring peace in the turbulent regions of the former Soviet Union. He should now put his promises into practice. From the outset of the clashes, even though countries such as Iran have played extremely important roles as mediators, the regional countries know that it is Russia that should play a key role in defusing the crises and regional turmoil.

By pressuring the two sides Russia can terminate the hostilities. Security can only be ensured for Russia with Moscow's participation in the process. But since Russia has special interests in these republics, it views the region from its own distinctive perspective. It has always put relations with them on its foreign policy agenda and will continue to do so.

Russia attaches greater importance to Tajikistan along with the other republics, for the following reasons:

—The support of the Russian minority, which is present in every republic.

—The contiguous province of Afghanistan and the apprehension that Kabul supports regime opponents. Since many Tajiks are resident in Afghanistan, the danger of dismemberment is an important issue for Russia. So Moscow constantly construes the safety of Tajikistan's borders as Russia's safety.

—Russia's efforts to play the role of regional power. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Moscow has constantly sought to revive the Russian empire and wishes to be known as the regional power. Hence it is always seeking to play the role of a mediator and peacekeeper.

In light of this some feel that this round has seen breakthroughs being made toward peace in Tajikistan. Russia will also play a more active role and talks between Yevgeniy Primakov and Akbar Turajonzoda, the acting leader of the Islamic Movement of Tajikistan, affirm this statement, even though the Russian Defense Ministry is seeking another policy.

But the two sides in the negotiations should keep some points in mind:

—Disputes are not resolved by dividing up territory.

—A decrease in individual and collective demands and attention to cumulative welfare and national interests and to what the people have gained since independence in 1991.

—A strengthening sense of acceptance of responsibility, because, since independence, the government and the opposition have spent their budgets on combating one another instead of searching for a better purpose, that is, the country's development.

You could say the two sides involved in Tajikistan should heed that after the Cold War, in 1990, the international structure of the world underwent fundamental changes, and the various countries are seeking to move toward a free economy and so on. Economic development can only be achieved if there is political stability. One of the means to security today is development in various departments, especially in the fields of economy and technology.

Accordingly, the two sides should view the country's problems in a more realistic manner and should cast aside their ethnic differences and think about stability. This is because the stability of the Central Asian republics of the former Soviet Union will contribute to the overall stability of the region. They should also remember that constant strife will result in the presence of all the supranational [fara-manteqeh'i] governments, especially the West's, which have their eyes pinned on this region.

This will harm the entire region because there should first be peace in Tajikistan so that regional cooperation can be forged.

Iran: Press Confirms Unrest in Tabriz

96LA0279D London KEYHAN in Persian 23 May 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] Simultaneous with reports of unrest in Azerbaijan, especially in Tabriz, five young people accused of murder and theft were hanged in public in Tabriz.

According to HAMSHAHRI newspaper, these five people, who were between the ages of 21 and 23, had killed three men and one old woman at her home and robbed them.

According to REUTER'S NEWS AGENCY, these five people were hanged in the heart of the Tabriz bazaar.

HAMSHAHRI did not announce the date of their execution, but based on a report by the Office of the Iranian Nation Party abroad, they were hanged on May 14, after the unrest and skirmishes between law enforcement forces in Tabriz, and about 100 people were arrested.

According to this report, protests began on 12 May when Mohammad 'Ali Chehregani, a candidate from Tabriz, made an announcement that his previous announcement about his resignation from the Majles was made under duress and pressure by the intelligence officials of the regime.

"The Foundation for the Defense of Democracy in Iran," which is a U.S. organization under the directorship of

Kent Timmerman, condemned the execution of these five young people in Tabriz in a statement published last Saturday [18 May] and expressed doubt about the questionable explanations of the press of the regime regarding their execution.

KEYHAN published in Tehran reported last Sunday (19 May) that two persons have also been hanged for rape in Kermanshah. The date of these executions was not announced.

The press of the Islamic Republic implicitly verified the occurrence of unrest in Tabriz last Monday (20 May). This report states that because of Chehregani's change of mind regarding being a Majles deputy, a riot broke out, but the officials of the regime suppressed it with full force.

Iran: Editorial Views Mandela's Visit to Britain

LD1907163196 Tehran KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL in English 17 Jul 96 p 2

[Unattributed editorial: Nelson Mandela]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] "He came, he saw and he conquered." This can be attributed to South African President Nelson Mandela considering the unprecedented rousing welcome and immense respect he received in Britain during his just concluded visit.

Whilst the people in Britain, like all over the world, were all praise for the charismatic 78-year-old leader, the British government as well as white supremacists worldwide, must have been taken aback when Mandela criticized Britain over its colonial past.

In a dignified speech to both houses of parliament, Mandela quietly but firmly reminded Britons that it was their colonization in the 18th century that sowed the seeds of white supremacy in South Africa.

Much to the embarrassment of the British government, he went on to add that his predecessors had come to London to appeal to the former colonial power for Africans to be treated equally with whites, but in vain.

However, Mandela in all humbleness, said: "Despite that rebuff and the terrible cost we had to bear as a consequence, we return to this honour place neither with pikes, nor a desire for revenge, not even a plea to your distinguished selves to assuage our hunger for bread. We come to you as friend."

He also did not fail to pay tribute to the millions in Britain and elsewhere who had stood up against apartheid, the most brutal form of racial oppression the world has ever seen.

Among the 2,000 assembled to hear Mandela was the former Conservative prime minister, Margaret Thatcher, who once shamelessly described him as "the leader of a terrorist organization" and stubbornly refused to join international sanctions against South Africa's then white regime in the 1980s.

Even the British monarch, who turned a blind eye to the sufferings of South Africans, including Mandela himself, and kept mum for almost three decades while he was languishing in prison for 27 long years, had to praise his wisdom, understanding and experience, and hail him as "the saviour of South Africa".

"You have, yourselves, provided the leadership and, by your willingness to embrace your former captors, have set the course towards national reconciliation and freedom for all the people of South Africa," the Queen was quoted as saying.

Had someone asked the great physicist Albert Einstein's opinion about Mandela, if he were alive today, who knows, he might have attributed him with the same historic remarks which he had made about Indian leader Mahatma Gandhi when he said: "Coming generations will hardly believe that such a person in flesh and blood ever walked upon this earth."

Iran: Foreign Ministry Responds to Criticism of Policy

LD2007190296 Tehran IRAN in Persian 16 Jul 96 p 2

[From the "Officially Speaking" column]

[FBIS Translated Text] The JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI daily newspaper on 14 July [date as published] devoted its leading article to the subject of "foreign policy" and commented that the performance of the country's foreign policy authorities shows methods incompatible with the principles of the Islamic revolution.

The Foreign Ministry Press and Information Department has set out the views of the ministry on foreign policy in a letter to the managing editor of JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI.

The text of that letter is here reproduced in a column entitled "Officially Speaking."

IRAN would like to inform its respected readers that from now on noble nation of Iran will be informed about the official stances of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the "Officially Speaking" column.

In His Exalted Name. Your eminence Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Masih Mohajeri, managing editor of JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI: Peace be upon you.

In your paper published on 13 July, in a leading article entitled "Foreign Policy, Defensive or Offensive?" concerning the arena of confronting the principal enemies of the revolution — specifically America, the Zionist regime, and their satellites — you ask whether an offensive policy will be successful or a defensive one, and then it is suggested that there should be no deviation from an offensive policy.

Respected managing editor: We agree with you on the generalities of an offensive approach toward the enemies of Islam. That is what we have done. However, in the arena of the complicated struggle against various formations in various fronts with evident and hidden international players, there are times when a shattering defense which reduces the vulnerability factor is far better than a shattering offensive which increases that factor. Therefore, at times a good defense is far better than 10 misplaced attacks.

Respected managing editor: How about talking about why they raised the dual-containment policy against us? Why did they adopt the sanctions plan, the punitive plan against companies dealing with the Islamic Republic of Iran, and approve the $20-million budget against us?

Why in three summits in three different parts of the world by industrial, European, and Arab countries, held in a span of less than a month, was the issue of Islamic Iran placed on the agenda?

Why do they describe our foreign policy as revolutionary, expansionist, and fundamentalist?

Why do they unjustly accuse us of trying to become nuclear, supporting terrorism, and violating human rights?

Why do they consider us as the factor responsible for the electoral defeat of the Zionist regime and discuss the effects of our policies on America's internal elections?

Why did they speak of the effectiveness, dynamism, and success of our foreign policy at the height of the Zionist regime's air, ground, and sea offensives against Lebanon carried out with America's support?

Why did the Bosnian authorities say again and again that Bosnia would not exist but for the Islamic Republic of Iran's support? Why is it that the eyes of the expelled school girls with their Islamic veil and the oppressed Muslims in Burma are set upon the bastion of Islam and why do they call our foreign minister the foreign minister of the world of Islam? Is all that for our offensive or for our defensive policies?

Dear managing editor: We believe, meanwhile, that a foreign policy cannot and should not be short-sighted and temporary; particularly when it comes to our foreign policy which in today's world is unique because of its nature and method. That is because at a juncture where the most powerful countries are disregarding their own values and doctrines for the sake of pursuing their national interests and are aligning themselves with what have been introduced as international values under the secular designation, our foreign policy is the flag-bearer of spirituality, righteousness, and justice in the world and stands up against the futile powers.

The enemies consider our policies as offensive, fundamentalist, and expansionist and speak of them as obstacles in the way of their evil demands, intentions, and policies. How is it that a lead writer can allow himself to call into question the country's diplomatic organ, which is under the astute and adroit living history [as published] of the foreign policy of the ruling system of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which has been repeatedly confirmed by his eminence Imam Khomeyni, God's blessing be upon him, and the exalted leader of the revolution [Ayatollah Khamene'i], and follows absolutely the decisions of the sacred Islamic ruling system? How can he thus, from within, make public opinion lose heart and, abroad, deal a blow against the formidable and revolutionary prestige of the only ruling system which is based on morals and spirituality, loved by all the oppressed in the world and supported by Islam?

Obviously the Foreign Ministry Press and Information Department is always ready to reply to rational questions and does not shirk from responding to the unfair allegations and attacks against the ceaseless efforts of those serving foreign policy. It hopes that our press, observing Islamic ethics and journalistic culture, will criticize but will also act as a powerful lever in the face of the widespread conspiracies of the enemies of Islam and encourage us in promoting the sanctified Islamic objectives throughout the world.

[Signed] Adviser to the minister and the director general of the Foreign Ministry Press and Information Department.

Iran: Daily Lauds Iran's 'Successful' Foreign Policy

NC2007051096 Tehran ABRAR in Persian 14 Jul 96 pp 1, 2

[Editorial: "Another Success for the Islamic Republic of Iran's Foreign Policy"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Islamic Iran played host to 52 ministers of the Organization of the Islamic Conference [OIC] member countries. This momentous conference was convened at a time when the pressures of the powers of world arrogance had reached their peak but fortunately these pressures have had the opposite effect. Hence it is necessary to assess the importance of the presence of the ministers of some Islamic countries from certain aspects:

1. The foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is not a single-dimensional one, dictated according to current international diplomacy. Our diplomacy is the corollary of the great Islamic Revolution and the exhortations of the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, his eminence, Imam Khomeyni (may God be pleased with him). Its strong roots are nurtured by the pure Islam of Muhammad (peace be upon him and his scion) and is a dynamic and active diplomacy. Not only has it not budged an inch from the principled stance of the Islamic Revolution, it has gained in strength and perserverance by the day.

The intelligent expediency of the foreign policy officials of the country for the vindication of rights of the oppressed Muslim nations of the world; their combating of infidels, and selflessness in the face of tyranny by the active presence of our foreign ministry in regional and international organizations, has forged so far ahead that the Muslims, and the oppressed peoples of the world consider this divine system their unique sanctuary. [pasage omitted]

Our foreign policy charter is definitely endorsed by the esteemed officials of our system to the extent that every subtle and precise detail of our positive and constructive moves are endorsed by our great leader and the esteemed president of the Islamic Republic of Iran. What constitutes the dynamism and vigor of the positive diplomacy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is our dedicated management along with a massive repository of experience and precision of our Foreign Ministry under the able guidance of our respected foreign minister.

Our multifaceted presence in organizations endorsed by the officials of the system projects to the world; our constructive foreign policies, the Islamic Republic of Iran's steadfastness on its rightful stances and success in all its constructive actions will introduce a young religious revolution to the world, in the true sense of the word. The categorical support of our people and the Muslims masses of the world, and of the oppressed in bondage, is a seal of guarantee for the durability of these actions and policies.

2. Islamic Iran — as an axis for the OIC — has so far propounded and implemented its constructive viewpoints and policies and on this path, the Islamic world has gained magnificent successes. A random mention would include dazzling successes achieved by the Muslims in Pakistan and the independence of the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina which are clear examples of the active diplomacy of the Foreign Ministry. There are the successes of the Muslims of Europe, the latest of which is the victory of the Islamist Welfare Party in Turkey of which the atheistic factions earlier professed to claim leadership. The brilliant triumph in eliminating various crises in the Central Asian countries and the active presence of the Islamic Republic of Iran in resolving the conflicts among these countries in the capacity of a country acceptable to both sides which certainly safeguards the interests of the Muslims of the region, is another vital example of our vigorous diplomacy.

3. In international matters and in foreign policy, the presence of a country in one organization or at one conference does not imply conformity with all the policies of that particular group or gathering. The principle of membership means presence at various committees and conferences. The OIC and its positive moves for the congregation of Islamic countries and the vindication of the rights of Muslims certainly gravitates around the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The hosting of such a grand conference in the Islamic Republic of Iran will certainly invalidate the erroneous and false policies of the White House and the usurpist Jerusalem regime for seeking to drag the Islamic Republic of Iran into isolation. The convocation of such a conference will certainly overshadow the news circles of the world, and the presence of the representatives of the various Islamic countries in the Islamic Republic of Iran is a seal of endorsement on the dynamic policy of our system.

4. The convocation of such a conference is usually preceded by various kinds of discussions and activities over months and years by the countries' officials who are hosting such an event. To have such an opportunity is matched or perhaps exceeded by the outcome of such conferences which is a major success for a country and an Islamic one in particular. This is because the cultural, economic, social, and political gains of this session are widely reflected in the Islamic countries and motivate the news apparatus to disseminate its positive outcome without any distortion.

5. The presence of representatives of certain countries whose policies are not endorsed by the Islamic Republic of Iran's system cannot be objected to. On principle when seminars are held under the aegis of the United Nations, the Nonaligned Movement, and the OIC there is no special selection [of participants] made. If this were the case, the active presence of the Islamic Republic of Iran in some countries and seminars — which was also quite successful — would have been banned by the host country.

The attendance by such represenatives cannot alienate the Palestinian nation from the Islamic Republic of Iran as the Palestinians have identified their true friends and allies today. It is the foreign policy formulated by the Islamic Republic of Iran, and its refusal to compromise with the enemy that gives them hope today for future success.

The Palestinian nation will never forget the positive policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the past few years. It was on the path of the same policy that the former prime minister of the Zionist regime Shim'on Peres lost the votes that he was due to receive in the elections on the brink of the final stage of the compromise with the obsequious Arab rulers, and the Zionist regime's domestic and foreign policy was eclipsed by the steadfastness of the Muslim nations of Lebanon and Palestine, and the Islamic Republic of Iran's multifaceted support for them.

Iran: Editorial Urges 'Aggressive' Foreign Policy

LD2007185996 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 13 Jul 96 p 1, 16

[Unattributed editorial: "Foreign policy, defense or offense?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Answering a theoretical-political question, which is one of the most important issues of the day, is now a key issue for our country's foreign policy. Only if they have a clear answer to this question can the people in charge of foreign policy in the Islamic Republic of Iran's system make correct decisions in their sphere of responsibility and remain immune from falling into the trap of proceeding on the basis of naivety and ignorance.

The question is: In the sphere of confronting the main enemies of the revolution — and, in particular, the United States, the Zionist regime, and their satellites — is an aggressive [tahajomi] policy the successful one or a defensive policy?

The answer to this question can be sought in two places, one has to do with principles and the other with actions. In the area of principles, basically, a school of thought based on justice, which claims to be a savior of humanity, never allows the enemy to attack it. Defensive actions are for people who have no aim other than to safeguard their existence. Such a system or such a school of thought naturally lacks any sense of responsibility towards others and, outside the framework of self-preservation, it possesses no principles, criteria, or standards that would cause any trouble for the tyrants and bullies of this world. If a country subscribes to such an ideology, it only acts to protect itself when its borders are attacked by an enemy. This constitutes defensive action. In the field of politics or commerce, too, such a situation may arise for such a country, in which case it would naturally defend its political or economic interests that had come under attack.

Such a situation does not apply at all in the case of countries and nations that have ideals and adhere to principles and criteria that go beyond their own domestic interests. These countries rise up — just as they would when their geographical borders or national interests are under attack — when their principles and ideals, which go beyond their borders, are threatened somewhere in the world and they attack the enemy. This was the meaning of the words of the noble Prophet of Islam when he said, anyone who does not look after Muslims is not one of them.

In the sphere of actions, apart from the clear record of the political lives of the noble Prophet of Islam and the Immaculate Imams, peace be upon them, in our age, too, the uprising of His Eminence Imam Khomeyni and the Islamic movement itself that led to the collapse of the shah's oppressive regime are clear indications of the need to adopt an aggressive policy towards enemies. The Islamic revolution achieved victory on the basis of an aggressive policy and it was on this basis that it was able to bring the superpowers to their knees.

In view of these clear facts, the custodians of the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran's system can only achieve victory in the face of the United States, the Zionist regime, and their satellites if they consistently rely on an aggressive policy. That which has taken place, at the hands of our country's Foreign Ministry officials, in recent weeks regarding the establishment of diplomatic ties with Egypt has not been based on this policy and the harm that we suffered in this connection resulted from this very oversight. Safeguarding the honor of the system of the Islamic Republic leads foreign policy officials to act intelligently in the face of the enemies of the revolution and to always abide by a policy of offense in this arena.

Iran: Rafsanjani Hails 'Splendid Reception' in Hamadan Visit

LD2207111596 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 22 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] President Hashemi-Rafsanjani, who visited Hamadan Province last Thursday [18 July] and Friday [19 July], has expressed gratitude for the splendid reception given to him by the people of that province and described it as the height of loyalty shown to the sacred ideals of his eminence the imam [Khomeyni], of devotion to the eminent leader

[Khamene'i] and to the system of the Islamic Republic, and of popular satisfaction.

Speaking in an interview with our correspondent last night, the president said: I am confident that the people understand that the path that has been chosen to save the country from dependence, to reform the economy, and to achieve independence is correct and is closer to justice. [passage omitted]

Iran: Cabinet Approves Change in Law on Cooperatives

LD2207111796 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 22 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The bill on the amendment of the law pertaining to the cooperatives sector of the Islamic Republic of Iran's economy was approved at the cabinet meeting held yesterday afternoon. On the basis of some of the amendments included in the bill, provision has been made for the participation of private individuals or of public and corporate bodies in cooperatives with the aim of supplying or increasing the capital required by cooperatives, as well as for obligatory annual audits of cooperatives and cooperative associations, with the aim of supervising their activities. [passage omitted]

Iran: Qom Environmental Pollution Reported

96LH0186A Tehran KAR VA KARGAR in Persian 3 Apr 96 p 2

[FBIS Translated Text] Environmental experts say: In the throes of its erratic economic and industrial growth, the municipality of Qom is experiencing problems caused by environmental pollution.

Factories producing bricks, lime, plaster, stone, and other construction materials here and there in Qom are busy destroying Qom's environment and even its desirable soil.

According to the latest statistics, 1,800 large and small production and industrial units are located in Qom, 48 percent of which are involved in mineral and non-metallic industries.

An expert on environmental matters said: More than anything else, industrial sewage from the textile factories and household sewage are threatening the water table for this region's drinking water.

The coefficient for household and industrial sewage backup into the water tables in the path of Qom's drinking water wells is 93 percent, and this is estimated at 65 million cubic meters per year.

It was decided that through use of the 15 Khordad dam, the water wells in the bed of Qom's central river will be taken out of the circuit, while after operation, with the appearance of the problems caused by the failure to install a permanent purification plant and the need to rebuild the beltway and the internal water distribution network, conditions developed where some of the water well inside the river remained active.

On the other hand, the consumption of fossil fuels is considered to be the major air pollutant in the city of Qom.

Based on the statistics for the Qom Office of the Environment, every year 30,961,090 kg of sulfur dioxide, 4,732,905 kg of sulfur trioxide, and 98,610,220 kg of suspended matter are brought into this city at the edges of the desert. At the same time, Qom suffers from a severe deprivation of green space.

Likewise, according to the statistics from the National Oil Company, Qom ranks No. 1 in the nation in the consumption of black oil and fuel oil. The mass of brick, lime, plaster, and asphalt kilns, especially to the east of Qom along the road to Kashan, are a clear illustration of the environmental pollution.

During the last few years efforts have been made to move the brick kilns to a suitable area, but each time these efforts have been frustrated.

At the same time, the destruction of the desirable agricultural soil in Qom by brick kilns becomes more extensive every day. According to an official statistic, 52,440 tons of clay is used annually in more than 1,000 kilns.

At the same time, the official in charge of the Qom Office of the Environment says that the problem of environmental pollution in Qom is not limited to the aforementioned instances.

The existence of 186 industrial livestock units, 1,500 traditional animal husbandry units, 383 units producing chicken and laying hens, also have their own effect on Qom's environmental pollution. In this city a significant part of the traditional animal husbandry operates within the city's residential areas.

Yet according to some of the insiders, about eight years of comprehensive effort to transfer the aforementioned animal husbandry to Qom's Jamkaran area, which is 15 km from the city, for unknown reasons have not yet yielded results.

The annoying smell of animal husbandry sewage in an important part of the Muzandadabad Power Plant area of Qom, which is the main district for keeping livestock, assaults the nostrils of each newcomer.

In these neighborhoods, livestock and human beings live side by side, and the various types of shared diseases in these districts always worry the city's health care and treatment officials.

Another environmental problem in this city is the factories producing plastic shoes, which began operating in Qom during the last 10 years.

Polluted and old plastic materials are brought to Qom from many other parts of the country and converted to various types of plastic shoes in factories that use primitive equipment.

The young and adolescent workers say that they work in these units from morning to night at small wages without the least bit of health insurance or security.

On the other hand, every year 13,000 tons of chemical fertilizer and 80 tons of plant pesticides are consumed in Qom.

According to officials at the Qom Office of the Environment, Qom is implementing projects to close about 145 producing units that pollute the environment, but solving the problem of pollution in this city demands greater effort.

Iran: Latest Food Prices Listed

96LA0279H London KEYHAN in Persian 23 May 96 p 2

[FBIS Translated Text] A traveler who arrived in Paris last Friday, 21 Ordibehesht, 10 May, announced the prices of some food and other items that she had bought for her husband's party as follows:

Chicken, 1,000 tumans per kg;
meat with fat, 800 tumans per kg;
meat without fat, 1,000 tumans per kg;
tomatoes, 250 tumans per kg;
rice, 750 tumans per kg;
lentils, 500 tumans per kg;
chick peas and beans, 500 tumans per kg;
cucumbers, 400 tumans per kg;
pistachios, 2,300 tumans per kg;
fava beans, 90 tumans per kg;
butter, if found, 300 tumans per 100 grams;
London rock seeds, 250 tumans per 100 grams;
Tavakkoli matches, 10 tumans per box, etc.

Iran: Price of Couponed Items Increases

96LA0279I London KEYHAN in Persian 23 May 96 p 3

[FBIS Translated Text] Prices of couponed items have increased five fold since last week. SALAM newspaper writes: Under the conditions in which the capital of the country is controlled by a special group, poor people become poorer every day. An employee told reporters: In previous years, I could buy everything, even on a salary of 5,000 tumans; but now I live with difficulty on an income of 100,000 tumans per month.

Iran: Annual Road Construction Detailed

96LA0220A Tehran RESALAT in Persian 27 Feb 96 p 15

[FBIS Translated Text] **Economic Division—Since the victory of the Islamic revolution, on the average, more than 2,400 km of roads have been built annually throughout the country.**

According to a report by our correspondent quoting the Plan and Budget Organization, in 1357 [21 March 1978-20 March 1979], the total length of the network of roads in the country, including freeways, highways, main and secondary roads, rural roads, and access roads, was 70,000 km, which with a growth of 59 percent has reached about 111,200 km this year.

In 1357, the amount of goods and passengers transported on the road transportation network was 67 tons and 164 million people, which this year amounted to 107 million tons and 580 million people, respectively.

This report adds: The length of the railroads in the country in 1357 was 4,567 km, and the amount of goods and passengers transported by railroads in that year was 6.9 million tons and 5.4 million people. In 1374 [21 March 1995-20 March 1996], the length of the railroads in the country, including main and secondary lines, reached 5,226 km, and the amount of goods and passengers transported that year increased to 23 million tons and 9.8 million people.

The capacity of the commercial ports of the country in 1357 was 13 million, and the amount of loaded and unloaded cargo in these ports in that year was 15.5 million tons. In 1374, the commercial capacity of the country reached 29.5 million tons (that is, more than double the capacity in 1357), and the amount of loaded and unloaded cargo in these ports reached 17.5 million tons.

In the area of sea transport, the number of ships in the commercial fleet of the country in 1357 was 42 ships, with a capacity of 799,000 tons, which in 1374 reached 70 ships, with a capacity of more than 2 million tons. Based on the above statistics, the commercial ports of the country, which previously paid for the high cost of late unloading, after the revolution have had a growth of 226 percent, and the transportation capacity of the commercial and sea fleet of the country also, with 28 new ships, has had a growth of 62 percent.

Pakistan

Pakistan: Foreign Minister Comments on CTBT, Relations With India

BK2107135696 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 21 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali has declared that Pakistan will stick to its position on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty [CTBT] by not blocking its conclusion. Talking informally to journalists in Islamabad today, he said it is India which has isolated itself on the issue. We cannot undermine the 40-year efforts of major nations, he said.

[Begin Ali recording] You see this is not our position. The entry-into-force is not just Pakistan's position. [sentence as heard] This is a position of Britain, of France, of China, and of Russia. So, we are one of five countries out of eight that have taken this position. So, ours is a principled position, while India has, for its own reasons, shifted its position, changed its position, and has added a conditionality, which is unrealistic and which the world is not prepared to meet. We also believe that there should be nuclear disarmament, but we are not prepared to subvert the 40 years effort of the entire world community, to block the treaty or to make it ineffective; and they have made it ineffective and by doing so they have isolated themselves in the whole world. [end recording]

Referring to Indo-Pakistan relations, he said Pakistan's position for solution of all outstanding issues with India, including the Kashmir dispute, is through negotiations. He said in the latest correspondence, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has conveyed to her Indian counterpart that Pakistan means business and it is willing to have negotiated settlement of all outstanding issues. He said Pakistan will effectively participate in the secretary-level talks with India once New Delhi responds to the correspondence of the prime minister.

Pakistan: European Commission Team, Leaders Discuss Cooperation

BK2107162096 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 21 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan and the European Union have agreed to initiate a dialogue for a new cooperation and partnership treaty. The comprehensive treaty will have a framework to deal with all the matters. This was stated by the vice president of the European Commission, Mr. (Manuel Moren), and Pakistan's Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali while addressing a news conference in Islamabad today. They said during two days of talks, the two sides agreed to upgrade political and economic relations.

Replying to a question, the vice president of the European Commission said child labor issue is not restricted to Pakistan as the problem exists in other countries of Asia, Latin America, and Africa. To another question, he said the two sides also discussed Kashmir issue. He said European Union wants peaceful solution of the problem through talks between Pakistan and India. Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali said that the two sides discussed political and security situation in the region, including Indo-Pakistan issues, particularly the Kashmir dispute. He lauded the European Union's decision to adopt a global approach toward Pakistan.

President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari has informed the European Commission delegation that Pakistan could play an active role for peace, stability, and economic development in the region. Talking to the vice president of the commission, Mr. (Manuel Moren), in Islamabad today, President Leghari said that Pakistan wants a peaceful solution of the Kashmir problem and return of peace to Afghanistan so that the people of this region could accelerate socioeconomic development. He urged the European countries to ask India for finding a peaceful solution of the Kashmir problem. He regretted that gross human rights violations and brutalities were being committed by the Indian forces on the Kashmiri people for the last several years. The president assured the visiting vice president of the European Commission that Pakistan would remove causes of bonded and child labor, which were against the tenets of Islam.

Pakistan: Government Gives 9-Point Package of Concessions to FPCCI

BK1907100796 Islamabad THE NATION in English 19 Jul 96 pp 1, 11

[Unattributed report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — Since the announcement of Budget 1996-97 on 13.6.1996, the representatives of the government have been engaged in a dialogue with the office-bearers of the FPCCI [Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry] and other representatives of trade and industry. The government side has been represented by Asif Ali Zardari, MNA [Member of National Assembly]; Cha. Ahmad Mukhtar, minister for commerce; Khalid Ahmad Khan Kharal, minister for information; Makhdoom Shahabuddin, minister of state for finance; Makhdoom Shah Mehmood Qureshi, minister of state for parliamentary affairs; and senior government officials. The business community was represented by Senator Ilyas Ahmad Bilour, Mehmood Ahmad, Iftikhar Ali Malik, Mr Tariq Saeed, Bashir Ali Muhammad, and others.

At the end of the first phase of negotiations, some concessions for trade and industry were announced by the government. These included:

i) Reduction of rate of sales tax from 18 percent to 10 percent on the four leading export related sectors in economy. These are textiles, sports goods, leather and leather goods including foot-wear and hand knotted carpets. Surgical goods, being already taxable at the concessional rate of 5 percent remained unaffected.

ii) In the case of corporate salaried taxpayers relief has been provided in the taxation of perquisities by treating the value of untaxed perquisites as a separate block of income taxable at 3 percent.

iii) Exemption to one self-owned and occupied shop has been provided for the purpose of wealth-tax assessment.

On conclusion of negotiations the following decision have been taken by the government:

i) The goods sent by foreign suppliers will be allowed the facility of temporary import against guarantee for the sales tax. This facility will be available to the goods sent free of cost by the suppliers. The type of goods allowed in this facility would be those which are supplier specific.

All these have to be re-exported.

ii) Matches will be exmpted from the levy of 5 percent central excise duty.

iii) Relief will be given to the poultry feed industry by reduction of custom duty on soyabean meal to 10 percent. Moreover the custom duty on feed grade vitamins and amino acids for feed industry will also be reduced to 10 percent. As a result the per bag price of poultry feed will decrease by Rs [rupees] 18. This will have favourable impact on the price of chicken and eggs.

iv) In order to provide chicken and eggs to the consumers at reasonable prices, the government will examine the possibility of import of these items. Necessary decision will be taken soon.

v) While sales tax exemption on cottage industry has been withdrawn in the budget, the small units having annual sale up to Rs 3 lac per year are outside the sales tax net. In order to provide further relief to the medium sized units whose turnover is between Rs 3 lac per year are outside the sales tax net. In order to provide further relief to the medium sized units whose turnover is between Rs 3 to 10 lac per year, the rate of Turnover Tax on the same is being reduced from 4 percent to 2 percent.

vi) It has been decided that raw hides/skins and wet blue leather for which commitments were made earlier and which has arrived at port up to 30th July 1996 shall be allowed clearance at the rate of duty and taxes applicable prior to the budget 1996-97.

vii) In order to insure that the sales tax measures do not result in any problems for taxpayers, the government has decided to set up an Advisory Committee in each Collectorate which will meet on regular basis. The objective is to ensure smooth transition of taxpayers to the new system, to curb any misuse of powers by any officials, to monitor collection taxes, etc. No action for arrest or prosecution of any registered taxpayer will be taken unless the concerned Collectorate has discussed the matter in the Advisory Committee before such action.

viii) Wholesalers of yarn will be charged income tax at 0.25 per cent of their turnover as full and final discharge of their tax liability for one year only.

ix) The problems of soap industry are being examined in the Anomalies Committee of CBR [Central Board of Revenue] and will be resolved shortly.

With the announcements of these concessions, the FPCCI has expressed its gratitude to the government and assured its whole hearted support to the implementation of budgetary measures.

Pakistan: Strike, Violence in Kashmir; Leaders Reject Elections

BK1907151696 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 19 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kashmiris are observing accession to Pakistan day today with a firm determination to continue their struggle for the liberation of occupied Kashmir. The day is being observed to commemorate the adoption of a historic resolution by the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference in Srinagar on this day in 1947, demanding that the State of Jammu and Kashmir be acceded to Pakistan in line with the partition plan. Political parties, social and literary organizations held meetings and seminars in various parts of Azad Kashmir to highlight the importance of the day, with special reference to the ongoing liberation struggle in occupied Kashmir. The speakers at these functions said the people of Kashmir have given unprecedented sacrifices for the achievement of their right of self-determination and they are determined to get freedom from the Indian slavery at any cost. They paid glowing tributes to the people of occupied Kashmir for rendering great sacrifices against brutalities of nearly 700,000 Indian forces.

In occupied Kashmir, a two-day strike began today in protest against Indian brutalities, killing of a commander of freedom fighters, and six tourists. The strike paralyzed the normal life as all business centers, bazaars, government and semigovernment offices, and educational institutions remained closed and transport kept off the road.

Meanwhile, 14 people including seven Indian troops were killed in clashes between freedom fighters and the Indian troops and in continued atrocities by the troops. In Kupwara, four troops were killed in land mine explosions. Three people were martyred by the Indian troops in the same area. At Harmukh in Islamabad area, a number of troops were killed and injured in a clash with freedom fighters. Three of the injured troops later died. The occupation forces also burned three houses during crackdown in Shupiyan area, while a house was blasted at Hayatpura in Badgom area. Indian agents shot dead two persons in Islamabad and four people were kidnapped and killed in Kulgam area.

According to AFP, a powerful mine exploded in Srinagar today, killing a boy and injuring three others. The explosion shattered windows of homes and offices, including those of UNI bureau.

The Indian Election Commission has announced that elections in occupied Kashmir will be held in September this year. The so-called elections will be spread over four phases. Meanwhile, All Parties Hurriyat Conference has rejected the bogey of assembly polls in occupied Kashmir. Two senior Hurriyat Conference leaders—Syed Ali Shah Gilani and Khwaja Abdul Ghani Lone—told newsmen in Srinagar that polls ploy would not solve the Kashmir issue. These polls are intended only to mislead world public opinion as Kashmir is a disputed territory. The Hurriyat leaders pointed out that the people were persecuted in the occupied territory so that they could be forced to take part in election farce.

Pakistan: Terrorist Bomb Blast at Lahore Airport

BK2207084496 Hong Kong AFP in English 0825 GMT 22 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Lahore, July 22 (AFP) — At least six people were killed and a dozen were injured when a bomb blast ripped through the transit lounge at Lahore International Airport Monday [22 July], police said.

Earlier, police had said the explosion occurred in the airport's VIP lounge.

"The blast was caused by a bomb," a police official said, adding that according to preliminary information the device had been left in the transit lounge in a bag.

Ambulances were taking casualties to hospital, witnesses at the airport said.

Pakistan: Report Details Chaudhri Nisar, Altaf Hussain Meeting

BK2207114796 Karachi DAWN in English 18 Jul 96 p 22

[Report by DAWN correspondent in London]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Mohajir Qaumi Movement [MQM] leader Altaf Hussain, who had a three-hour long meeting with Chaudhri Nisar Ali Khan, a senior Muslim League leader, said that he was happy that opposition parties were now coming together to resist the undemocratic actions of the present government.

MQM sources said that Chaudhri Nisar delivered a special message from the Muslim League leader, Nawaz Sharif to Altaf Hussain.

The two leaders, during their lengthy meeting, discussed the current political situation in the country.

Chaudhri Nisar is said to have told Altaf Hussain that Pakistan is crying out for a change and the coming together of different political parties is with the aim of getting rid of the present government in the national interest.

They said that the government has demolished the constitutional structure in the country and a change has, therefore, become inevitable.

In another move, ten members of the British parliament have tabled an 'early day motion' concerning the human rights situation in Pakistan.

The 'early day motion' calls for the lifting of all restrictions of democratic political activity, particularly for the restoration of all legitimate rights to the MQM and specifically demands the release of all its elected representatives, party workers and all other political prisoners, and an end to torture, disappearances and state terrorist killings, the victims of which are not only political activists belonging to tile MQM but other innocent members of the Mohajir community.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: LTTE Claim 800 Soldiers Killed in Garrison Offensive

BK2007084496 Hong Kong AFP in English 0659 GMT 20 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Colombo, July 20 (AFP) — Tamil Tiger guerrillas claimed Saturday [20 July] to have killed 800 Sri Lankan soldiers after overrunning a military garrison, a figure which if true would make it the worst debacle for government forces in the long-running civil war.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) said its fighters had recovered 800 bodies of soldiers from the ruins of the battle at the army camp in the coastal town of Mullaitivu that had housed some 1,000 troops.

"The casualty figure might rise as more troops are being killed from small pockets of resistance outside the camp perimeter," an LTTE statement from London said.

If the government toll is in fact 800, it would be the worst debacle for the Sri Lankan military in the dragging campaign for a Tamil homeland, which has claimed more than 50,000 lives. The highest previous toll was 750 killed when the rebels wiped out a military garrison in Jaffna peninsula in November 1993.

Military officials were not available to comment on the LTTE claim. But a military spokesman said reinforcements sent from other places to Mullaitivu had failed to make contact with the besieged camp.

The Mullaitivu offensive, the biggest by the LTTE since it was founded in 1976, came shortly after Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga, who is the defence minister, left for London on an unannounced private visit.

The LTTE said it had informed the International Committee of the Red Cross, which functions in the war zone, that the Tigers "were prepared to hand over the bodies of the soldiers to the Sri Lankan government."

Tamil sources and Western diplomats called the battle a major blow to the military, which had been upbeat since wresting control of the LTTE stronghold of Jaffna in the north in December.

"It is a severe setback," a diplomat said. "The toll could be higher. The reinforcements may get wiped out."

Added Douglas Devananda, a Tamil MP violently opposed to the diehard Tigers: "The LTTE launched this attack to avenge their defeat in Jaffna."

The LTTE statement said its guerrillas took control of the garrison overnight Friday [19 July] after two days of fierce fighting with the besieged troops and the reinforcements, including elite commando units.

"Sea Tiger units ... have foiled all attempts by the Sri Lankan navy to land troops in the battle front," it said.

A Sri Lankan gunboat with 40 sailors sank off Mullaitivu Friday after it was rammed by two LTTE speed boats packed with explosives, officials said.

The clandestine Voice of Tigers radio, monitored in the northern town of Vavuniya, said five Black Sea Tigers, who specialise in suicide bombings, died in the daring attack.

The LTTE statement from London made no reference to its casualties, but the Tigers' radio said it had lost 120 fighters so far in the attack on the garrison and subsequent fighting.

The LTTE, one of the most ruthless and disciplined guerrilla groups in the world, launched a massive onslaught on the Mullaitivu camp early Thursday [18 July] using hundreds of fighters who pounded it with mortars and shells.

The guerrillas, including women, quickly penetrated the camp, creating a panic among soldiers, many of whom fled into jungles, the LTTE said. The Tigers looted a large quantity of weapons and ammunition including field artillery.

Military and diplomatic sources here said fighting was still raging in the remote region, with the LTTE guerrillas pinning down the remaining soldiers and reinforcements.

"Most of the camp has been destroyed," a Western diplomat said.

Another diplomat said the LTTE was in control of the garrison's sea side and asking troops still fighting the rebels to surrender.

Sri Lanka: Military Spokesman Denies LTTE Overran Military Base

BK2007094596 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 20 Jul 96

[By A. S. Fernando; received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] There is no truth in reports that the Mullaitivu military base was overrun by the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam], military spokesman Brigadier Sarath Munasinghe said on Friday [19 July].

"The bulk of the troops are still within the base and holding on to it. We are in full control of the base," he told a hurriedly summoned Press briefing at the Defence Ministry yesterday.

The troops at the base withstood the enemy assault giving a good account of themselves and did not vacate it at any time during fighting, the spokesman maintained.

"It was not an attack launched from a position of strength. I would call it a desperate attack made to boost the LTTE's image in the eyes of their sympathizers abroad. They lost face when they lost the Jaffna peninsula. So they resorted to this suicidal assault as a face-saving attempt," Munasinghe said.

He added: "The LTTE's funds have dropped to almost zero after losing Jaffna. They have to impress the benefactors with some showing to extract monies."

Journalist : How do you know that they are short of funds?

Brigadier Munasinghe: We have our sources of intelligence.

Asked whether it was true that LTTE leader Prabhakaran was injured during fighting at Mullaitivu, the Brigadier replied: "We have not given that information. And we do not propose to be a party to spreading rumours."

Munasinghe said to their knowledge that neither Prabhakaran nor even his second in command had ever been at the battle front.

"The LTTE leaders are only sacrificing their young cadres while they remain away from where action is," he said.

Munasinghe told the media personnel at the outset not to ask for casualty figures. "Because we are still not in a position to give figures."

However, fielding questions from the newsmen, Munasinghe said that the LTTE would have suffered very heavy casualties.

He pooh poohed some agency reports that the army suffered about 500 dead as "absurd."

He said that the reinforcements who were helicoptered to a place south of Mullaitivu were expected to link up with the troops at the base yesterday afternoon. "Reinforcements came under enemy fire which slowed down their progress. But our information is that they would be linking up with the troops in the base shortly."

The brigadier said that the LTTE penetrated the forward defences of the sprawling base at two points. "They stormed in large numbers and tried to penetrate the defences with no regard for human life, and in fact for their own too. The LTTE did not appear to care about the big sacrifice they were making."

The LTTE cadres who succeeded in penetrating the forward defences damaged the communication tower in the base.

"But we continued to maintain contact with our men in the base with smaller equipment," he added.

Munasinghe said that they would be able to give casualty figures once the reinforcements linked up with the base troops.

Brigadier Munasinghe said that the attack on the Mullaitivu base had caused no setback to the ongoing Operation Seda Pahara in the east.

Sri Lanka: LTTE Reports Attack on Mullaitivu Army Garrison

BK2007095596 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in English 19 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] On the 18th of July at about 12.10 am, LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] forces launched a massive attack on the Sri Lankan military installation in Mullaitivu. Two major contingents of over one thousand LTTE fighters smashed the Sri Lankan army defence lines and entered the inner perimeter from the south and the north of the military complex. After heavy fighting the entire sea coast defences and the interior section of the complex fell to the LTTE forces.

The military complex was manned by over 2000 Sri Lankan soldiers with highly sophisticated armoury and surrounded by sea on three sides.

The fourth side is flat terrain favourable to the army. The entire complex covers several miles with buildings, embankments and other fortifications.

It is estimated that more than 400 Sri Lankan soldiers were killed in the fighting. A Sri Lankan naval unit which arrived on the scene was also attacked by the LTTE forces. Vast quantities of arms and ammunitions were captured by the LTTE forces and local people in the surrounding Tamil areas are helping the LTTE fighters to move them to safe areas. LTTE forces have also surrounded the Sri Lankan armed forces who landed in helicopters in Alampil area about 10km away from the Mullaitivu army base and heavy fighting is continuing there.

So far 40 LTTE fighters have attained martyrdom in this battle which is described as the biggest operation by the LTTE forces in the 13 year war. The Tamil Nation salutes these fallen heroes who sacrificed their lives for the liberation of the Tamil homeland.

Sri Lanka: Report Details Latest Government, LTTE Fighting

BK2107103496 Colombo SUNDAY OBSERVER in English 21 Jul 96

[Report by Ramani Kangaraarachchi — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] THE ARMY, Navy and Air Force chiefs had moved to Trincomalee Saturday [20 Jul] to personally coordinate efforts to relieve the besieged Mullaitivu Army base as more troops were heli-landed nearby Saturday afternoon in efforts to link up with the defenders.

Heavy fighting was continuing between the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] assault force and defending troops.

Meanwhile, a Navy gunboat was sunk off the coast of Mullaitivu on Friday [19 July] evening in a suicide attack by two Sea Tiger boats.

Army reinforcements rushing to relieve the embattled base were also suffering casualties as they fought their way into Mullaitivu.

Units inside the besieged Mullaitivu base had revealed that the majority of the troops were still together and were continuing to defend themselves, the latest Defence Ministry communique, issued at 5 p.m. yesterday, said. According to the communique, there was a second group of soldiers who were also holding their positions within the overall defended base area away from the main group of defenders.

The Ministry said that, according to information available so far, 142 soldiers have been killed in action while defending the base and 168 wounded. The wounded are being treated inside the base with the available facilities.

The reinforcements, which were heli-landed earlier "continue to advance in order to link-up with the Mullaitivu base," the communique said. On Sunday [21 July] afternoon further units were heli-landed under enemy fire by the SLAF [Sri Lankan Air Force] to strengthen the advancing relief force.

The relief force was advancing in the face of resistance by the LTTE, the Ministry said. Thirty seven soldiers had died in action so far during the advance while 58 wounded personnel were evacuated by the SLAF.

"Ground troops confirmed having seen a minimum of approximately 200 LTTE dead bodies strewn over the area," the communique said.

The communique, issued by the Operational Headquarters of the Defence Ministry, said that the LTTE had admitted in its radio transmissions that 181 cadres had been killed during the initial assault on the base.

The Ministry said that so far, 124 names of rebel fighters killed have been released by the LTTE. This includes Mullaitivu military leader Kumaran, women's wing leader Meena Akka, Sea Tiger leader Nalayan Master, Trincomalee group leader Madhuvanan, Mullaitivu group leader Milton.

"The number injured can be very high especially in view of the strong defences, including the obstacle belt, of the Mullaitivu base and, the human wave tactics adopted by the LTTE," the Ministry said.

Defence sources said that a number of troops of the Army special forces units who were rushed to the aid of the Mullaitivu defenders had been injured in clashes with the LTTE. Some fifty personnel were brought to the Anuradhapura hospital on Friday evening.

The injured included Mullaitivu army base brigade commander Colonel Lawrence Fernando. The commanding officers of the special forces regiment, Lt.Col. Lafeer, who led the relief units, was among those reported killed in the on-going fighting.

Gunboat SLNS Ranaviru was sunk off the Mullaitivu coast in a Sea Tiger attack while on patrol on Friday evening, a Defence Ministry communique said.

The Ranaviru, which was on patrol about 2 km off the coast, had intercepted and engaged a flotilla of Sea Tiger boats when it was rammed by two boats crewed by Tiger suicide cadres.

The gunboat sank and other Navy vessels are now at the site looking for any survivors among its 35 crew.

Up to 30 LTTE cadres, including the Sea Tiger suicide boat crews, are believed to have been killed in this confrontation, a Defence Ministry communique said. (subjected to censorship)

Sri Lanka: LTTE—Mullaitivu Military Camp Under 'Full LTTE Control'

BK2107132196 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in English 20 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text]

Mullaitivu Military Camp Now Under Full LTTE Control

After two days of fierce battle, the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] fighter units have overrun the military complex at Mullaitivu and brought the camp area under their control last night. So far 800 bodies of soldiers have been recovered from the ruins of battle and the casualty figure might rise as more troops are being killed from small pockets of resistance outside the camp perimeter. The LTTE has also informed the ICRC that they are prepared to hand- over the bodies of soldiers to the Sri Lankan government.

Sea Tiger units operating along the coastal area of Mullaitivu have foiled all attempts by the Sri Lankan Navy to land troops in the battle front. A Sri Lankan Naval ship manned by 40 sailors was destroyed by Sea Tigers as it approached the coastal area last evening.

In the meantime, the reinforcement troops airlifted from helicopters at Alampil, 10 km from Mullaitivu, have suffered severe casualties and face virtual annihilation by the LTTE forces.

Sri Lankan Army Fires Artillery Shells on Tamil Villages

The Sri Lankan soldiers at the Elephant pass army camp, angry after the fall of their Mullaitivu army base, took their revenge by firing artillery shells at several Tamil villages in the Kilinochchi district.

In the early morning at about 4.30 am on July 18, the Sri Lankan soldiers fired many rounds of artillery shells at the farming villages of Uruthirapuram and Kanakapuram in the Kilinochchi district. In the evening on July 19, further rounds of shells were fired at the Kilinochchi Town and the surrounding villages. The casualty figures are not available. The shells that were fired at the Kilinochchi Town caused lots of destruction. Loss of human life is low as most of the people living within the Elephant pass artillery range have fled to areas out of range of the guns.

Sri Lankan Fighter Planes Bomb Tamil Villages

On Friday, July 19, the Sri Lankan Kfir supersonic fighter planes dropped bombs on the peaceful village of Palaliya Maththalan in the Mullaitivu district. Marianayagam, 23, the father of one child lost his leg as shrapnel cut through his thigh. He has been admitted to the hospital.

BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 352
MERRIFIELD, VA.

This is a U.S. Government publication produced by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS). Its contents in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the U.S. Government.

FBIS collects, translates, disseminates, and analyzes foreign open-source information on behalf of the U.S. Government. Its publications may contain copyrighted material. ***Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.***

— Bracketed indicators before the first sentence of each item describe the way in which the material was processed by FBIS.

— Headlines and all bracketed explanatory notes are supplied by FBIS.

— Personal and place names are rendered in accordance with the decisions of the U.S. Board on Geographic Names as adapted by FBIS. Unverified names in radio and television material appear in parentheses and are spelled phonetically; words and phrases in parentheses preceded by a question mark are unclear in the original and deduced from context.

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

U.S. Government Customers

For a list of FBIS products, to subscribe to an FBIS publication, or to indicate a change of address contact:

FBIS
P.O. Box 2604
Washington, DC 20013-2604
Telephone: (202) 338-6735
FAX: (703) 733-6042

Non-Government Customers

Subscriptions are available from the National Technical Information Service:

NTIS
5285 Port Royal Road
Springfield, VA 22161
Telephone: (703) 487-4630
FAX: (703) 321-8547

New subscribers should expect a 30-day delay in receipt of the first issue.